MAHATMA HANSRAJ


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MAKER OF THE MODERN PUNJAB

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. *Maharana Pratap*
2. *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*
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5. *Democracy in the Saddle*
6. *Organization of Public Services in Mughal India*



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LAHORE.

PREFACE

Mahatma Hansraj lived so full a life and played a prominent part in so many spheres that it is difficult to do him full justice within the short compass of three hundred pages. The following story makes an attempt at drawing the bold outline of his manifold useful and creative activities. To put on paper the grandeur of his heroic life and to communicate to the reader the love, sympathy, deep understanding and self-surrender which those who came in personal contact with him felt is not an easy task. Whatever small measure of success I have achieved is entirely due to the countless admirers, friends, colleagues, and relatives of Mahatma Hansraj who ungrudgingly placed at my disposal all that they knew about him. I am grateful to them all for their kind help. A good deal of material for this work was also drawn from the records of the Dayanand College Managing Committee and the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha. I am very much grateful to the office-bearers of both these bodies for permitting me the use of their records. I am deeply indebted to Lala Balraj for allowing me access to the extant volumes of the *Diary* of Mahatma Hansraj and giving me permission to quote from it. Lala Mulkraj Bhalla, Bakhshi Tek Chand, Lala Sain Das, Lala Diwan Chand, and Pundit Bahadur Mal read the whole or the parts of the manuscript in various stages of its preparation and I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to them for their valuable help and advice.

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CHAPTER I

Parentage and Early Life

Bajwara is a small sleepy old town which was at one time the administrative headquarters of the territories now comprised in the district of Hoshiarpur in the Punjab. Its history goes back to the days of the Lodis. Early in the sixteenth century, Sher Shah Suri's grandfather was granted the *pargana* of Bajwara as a jagir by Behlol Lodi. The old fort seems to be a relic of still earlier times. Fourteen stonewells scattered all about the town hark back to a period when stone was used instead of burnt bricks for such purposes, even though it had to be brought from some distance. The town apparently acquired its present name from—if it was not actually founded by—the Vij Khatris who appear to have settled here in large numbers. Nestling close by, across the small *Cho* which separates it from Hoshiarpur, is Bhikowal. Tradition has it that it was never a village in any recognised sense of the term. The name, therefore, seems to go back to the time when it probably formed a retreat, during the rainy season, of the Buddhist priests.

In this town, thus hallowed by the traditions of an old religious settlement, as well as a great administrative past, lived a Khatri family, Bhalla by sub-caste. Its present descendants claim that their first ancestor was a ruling chief at Sirsa, near Hissar. Muhammad Ghori's invasion resulted in the dispersal of the family, although Sirsa, which was first lost to the invader, was later recaptured by a member of the family. Four of the descendants of the chief are said to have wandered far and wide before they found at Bajwara a haven of

refuge. When Guru Amar Das, a Bhalla by sub-caste, became the hereditary Guru of the Sikhs, the Bhallas acquired a sacerdotal character.

The head of this family in the second half of the nineteenth century was Lala Salamat Rai. He followed the hereditary occupation of money-lending amid medieval surroundings. Money-lending was at that time very much a matter of mutual trust. The money-lenders were, of course, literates of a sort. They kept accounts both for themselves and for their debtors. Written and signed agreements or receipts were very uncommon. Money-lending was a social institution besides being the means for supplying credit. The loan was payable whenever the debtor could conveniently repay it. The money-lender acted as the store-keeper to such of his clients as were agriculturists. At the harvest time he would act as their accountant and very often provided them with store-houses in his own shop. The relations between the debtor and the creditor were pleasant. All this was possible, because any disagreement between the parties could always be referred to the village *panchayat*, whose members were as frequently witnesses as they were judges and jury in such cases. They expressed the judgment of the community, rather than decided the case as disclosed on the evidence of the parties.

All this was changed when the Doab was annexed by the British after the First Sikh War in 1846. The administration of justice by the *panchayats* gave place to its administration by local official courts situated in district towns. Presided over by officials, not necessarily from the same locality, and adopting a law of procedure developed elsewhere, they now decided cases on the evidence submitted to them by the parties. It was not their duty to determine the facts of the case; they confined themselves to determining the facts of the

case *on the record.* Written and signed agreements, receipts, and other similar documents now began to play a very important part, as did also the production of the necessary witnesses to establish a claim.

Lala Salamat Rai found it hard to adapt himself to the change. He was accustomed to keeping his accounts in such a way as to give his clients no chance of complaint. He dealt with them as his sense of duty or their difficulties dictated to him. His clients pleaded no law of limitation ; he, in his own turn, could ask for the production of no written receipts. Now, however, in common with many others of his type in the occupied districts, he discovered that he must comply with the law of limitation, and, even to win a just claim, must support it by written agreements or produce eye-witnesses. It is said that he burnt his account books because he thought that the English were unclean and that he should not desecrate himself by appearing in their courts ! He not only gave up money-lending himself but decided that it was no profession for his young son, Chuni Lal, to follow.

Chuni Lal, the only son of his parents, was born about 1832. He was married in 1847, just when the English were occupying the Doab. As was usual in those days, he received a good Persian education, probably from a Muslim Maulvi at Bajwara itself. He took delight in the study of the *Diwan* of Hafiz and the *Badr-i-Munir* among other Persian classics.

But this did not continue for long. After coming in contact with Pundit Nand Kishore, a well-read and pious Brahman, he cut off the long hair which he used to wear in the fashion of the Pathans and began to worship Saligram.

If the annexation ruined the family occupation, it opened to the young boy a new field for his employment—Government Service. His scholarship

seems to have attracted the attention of local officials, and he got a post in the now extinct British Cantonment of Hoshiarpur, where he was joined by his sister and brother-in-law. For some time the family lived together happily, but soon the sharpness of his sister's tongue made his mother persuade him to leave that job to his brother-in-law and seek some other source of livelihood. He then became a *Field-Qanungo*, supervising the work of the village patwaris. He soon established a reputation for honesty which few dared to assail. The story is still told how a rich family in the neighbourhood once approached him in connection with some land revenue work in their estate. Its agent told him that the family did not care very much how much they spent on the case. But for the fact they knew he was above such temptations, they would have offered him Rs. 1700! But his sense of self-respect brought him into conflict with one of his superiors, when he discarded the head-gear which his irate superior had tried to dishonour. Such a man was not destined to remain long in Government service. He soon gave up his comfortable job to search for some more independent opening.

The judicial courts which had caused the father give up money-lending beckoned to the son and he became an *Appeal Nawis*, drafting in legal phraseology and correct official language, documents and deeds in which the courts could find no flaw. The British occupation of the Punjab was just in its beginning. Vakils were few and far between. Courts very often needed help in understanding local customs and usages. The result was that many people, not professionally Vakils, were sometimes allowed to argue cases in courts. Lala Chuni Lal was able to make use of his undoubted talents in this line and even appeared several times in the highest court to present and argue the cases of his clients at Lahore. He soon achieved an enviable

position and is said to have been paid not infrequently hundreds of rupees for his legal services. When Sardar Bahadur Sardar Amin Chand of Bajwara came to occupy a very important position in the Rajputana administration, he remembered his townsman, Chuni Lal, and offered him a comfortable post as a Tehsildar under him. Chuni Lal's spirit of independence, however, prevented him from accepting this gift at the hands of a fellow townsman.

Quoting a famous Persian couplet

حقا که با عقوبت دوزخ برابر است   رفتن بپائے مردئی همسایه در بهشت

he gratefully declined the offer.

He had married Shrimati Ganesh Devi, daughter of Lala Mai Ditta Mal of Nawanshahr. If Lala Salamat Rai was respected as a Bhalla, Lala Mai Ditta Mal was a *sarpanch* of the Laroia sub-caste. His daughter Shrimati Ganesh Devi brought to her husband her father's habit of laying down the law. The first son, Mulkraj was born on April 23, 1863; the second, Hansraj, on 19th April, 1864. Hansraj's birth was duly celebrated by the Pundits according to the customs of the clan, with their usual spells and incantations. The womenfolk used their vast knowledge of the family lore in preparing appropriate charms to ensure good fortune for the boy. The family *purohita* (priest) prepared the boy's horoscope and gladdened the heart of his parents, and still more of his grandfather, by finding therein long life, prosperity, riches and other untold blessings for the young boy. Not even in his wildest dreams could that priest have imagined what the Fates had in store for this young child, a pathfinder, a nation builder, and veritably the Mahatma that he was later to be called! Who knows what advice he would have offered the glad grandfather, had he been able to foresee the path of poverty that this young child was voluntarily to choose for himself? What spells and charms would have

been procured, how many Brahmans feasted and gods propitiated, if the parents had been able to read the future and thereby frustrate what Fortune had in store for their son ?

Fondly loved by his old grandfather, and brought up with care and affection by his parents, young Hansraj grew up a sickly boy. Whatever else he inherited from his parents, a good physique was not one of these gifts.

Probably the earliest thing that Hansraj remembered was the death of his grandmother, Kishen Devi. She came of a very rich family of Rahon. Her father, Lala Makhan Mal, was a treasurer of *Sukarchakia Misl* of the Sikhs. When she was married, the ceremonial ground is said to have been covered with gold plate, and the ceremonial figures on it were drawn by strings of pearls! She was accompanied by several maid servants sent with her as part of the dowry. On certain festivals her parents used to send her as much as Rs. 200 which was quite a large sum in those days.

The first cloud on the family horizon was the death, in 1867, of Hansraj's grandfather, Lala Salamat Rai. The young boy felt it so keenly that he fell ill. Like all young children, however, he soon got over it.

Lala Chuni Lal was a man of varied interests. He did not allow his profession to exhaust his energies. He studied the current medical literature, which his knowledge of Persian peculiarly fitted him to do. Not content with mere theoretical knowledge, he usually stocked such *Unani* medicines as could be easily prepared, and these he gave away to all and sundry, whenever there was a call on his generosity.

When Hansraj was not yet four, he developed a troublesome sore on his chest. Lala Chuni Lal had enough confidence in his own knowledge of

medicine to open it, even after it had been pronounced dangerous by the local physicians. The wound healed well, and in his child's recovery the father found a precious testimony to his skill.

It is interesting to recall that the father showed some of that indifference to riches which his son Hansraj was to embody so completely later on. Lala Chuni Lal did not use his knowledge of medicine to supplement his income, but made it a claim on his piety, and therefore, on his purse. When cholera broke out at Bajwara in 1872, for example, we find him serving his fellow-townsmen as best as he could with his medical knowledge and skill.*

Another trait of his father calls for notice. As a Bhalla Khatri by caste, he regarded himself as a priest. But Lala Chuni Lal had studied Persian. There was a saying then current in the Punjab, پڑھے فارسی آدھا مسلمان , "One read in Persian is half a Muslim", and Chuni Lal was no exception to this adage. Without sacrificing his own religious beliefs, he kept the company of pious men wherever he found them, whether Hindu or Muslim. His leaning towards medicine—then usually a Muslim preserve in the Punjab—further accentuated his association with Muslim scholars and men of piety. Without bringing any slur on his caste, Chuni Lal would invite Hindu and Muslim guests to his house to celebrate at one time a Hindu festival, at another a Muslim holiday. It is an interesting commentary on the social life of those times that the Muslim guests would not make him break the rules of his caste by sitting at the same table with him, nor would his Hindu townsmen treat him as an outcaste for taking part in Muslim practices.

In such a household young Hansraj grew up. When he was four years four months and four days

* His eldest son, Lala Mulkraj, has enshrined this fact in the Chuni Lal Hospital that he founded at Bajwara in 1926.

old, he began his schooling. First came the *purohita* formally introducing the child to the Hindi script. This religious ceremony was followed by the distribution of sweets which marked then, as it does to-day, every auspicious occasion among the Hindus. Then Hansraj was sent to school at Bajwara which, as a suburb of Hoshiarpur, could boast of a school. Here appropriate gifts were offered to the teacher. A clever child, Hansraj made rapid progress. He had an elder brother to help him and his father also occasionally supervised his studies. It was the custom for the young and the old in the village to gather under an old banyan tree. The elders were not always content with watching the children at play. They considered the younger generation fair game. One evening Lala Ganesh Dass, a much respected inhabitant of the village, chose Hansraj as his victim and started examining him. Hansraj had not yet spent more than a year at school, but his tormentor discovered to his surprise that he was not only a bright boy but distinctly forward for his age.

Hansraj's schooling was not destined to be uninterrupted. He was seven when overwork and anxiety led to his father's developing a serious illness. He had given up his work as an *Appeal Nawis* and became personal assistant to a Bengali Vakil, who had started practice at Hoshiarpur. One day, while he was returning to Bajwara after his day's work at Hoshiarpur, Lala Chuni Lal lost consciousness. Such attacks became so frequent that soon he had to give up his work. Young though Hansraj was, he had now to shoulder a fair share of the family troubles. This was partly responsible for a quarrel between Hansraj and his teacher which put an end to his first term of education when he had been at school for less than three years.

Several treatments were tried for his father. Physicians did their best, but in vain. Then it

was suggested that he was under the influence of an evil spirit. Magic was resorted to but without any result. Sadhus and *fakirs* were also called. They administered medicines and said prayers, but again to no effect. It was then suggested that certain Quranic verses should be recited a number of times every day. Young Hansraj did this for a month but found no relief in his father's condition. Finally somebody recommended that fifteen copies of certain charms be written with a pen made of a pomegranate twig, but this also proved equally unavailing.

Hansraj's schooling was now interrupted on account of other demands on his time. But even while he was attending his father in his last illness, he went on gathering some rudiments of knowledge at home. His elder brother occasionally helped him.

An Indian village in those days offered many opportunities to the young for recreation. Hansraj was particularly interested in playing with marbles and soon became the champion player in the village. This he followed up by learning to play chess. In 1875 his father was removed to Ajnoha, a village at some distance from Bajwara, for treatment by a sadhu, Gosain Udaigir, whose fame had spread throughout the district. Hansraj accompanied him. Two chess players used to meet for a game in the house where Lala Chuni Lal was staying. Young Hansraj was always an interested spectator. One afternoon, one of the players did not turn up ; the other waited for him for some time, but at last his patience was exhausted, and he jokingly invited Hansraj to take a hand at the game. The young boy accepted the challenge. The play began, and, to his astonishment, the seasoned player discovered that the boy was more than a match for him. Hansraj won the game to the applause of the whole village.

Young as he was, Hansraj dutifully attended his father all through this serious illness and thus at a very early age experienced directly the difficulties of life which he was afterwards to surmount so successfully.

Gosain Udaigir of Ajnoha was supposed to be a good physician. Lala Chuni Lal had gone to him in faith and humility, but the treatment did him no permanent good. He was brought back to Bajwara where he died on 14th February, 1876, when Hansraj was less than twelve years old.

The death of Lala Chuni Lal plunged the whole family into gloom. His continuous illness had not only put an end to his own earnings but had also exhausted all his savings. His family discovered to its painful surprise that it had very little left to live upon.

Shrimati Ganesh Devi now became virtually the head of the family which now consisted of herself, two sons, Mulkraj and Hansraj, and two daughters. Of her two sons, Mulkraj the elder, though nearly sixteen, was still a student in the Government High School, Hoshiarpur. Hansraj seems to have so far been educated at home. Neither of them was capable of becoming immediately a breadwinner for the family. The mother, however, would not think of allowing Mulkraj to leave his education unfinished and take up some profitable employment. Rather than do that, she put her hands to whatever odd job she could get, and succeeded in supporting the family as well as bearing the expenses of Mulkraj's education.

An aunt offered to take Hansraj with her to Jullundur where she lived, and thus shoulder the burden of educating him ; but as ill-luck would have it, cholera broke out at Jullundur. Hansraj was then sent to Mianmir, near Lahore, where his cousin—his aunt's son—was employed. Unfortunately there was a theft in the house soon after his

arrival. Not much was said to Hansraj; he was not considered personally responsible for the theft. But dark hints began to gather round the young boy. Wherever he went, his relatives began to murmur, he brought ill-luck. His grandfather had died three years after his birth, then had come the turn of his father, followed by an outbreak of cholera at Jullundur, and a theft at Mianmir. The only common factor in all these occurrences was Hansraj and nothing was more reasonable than to hold, according to the superstitions of the times, that the unlucky stars of Hansraj had made him a source of trouble wherever he went. This ended his stay at Mianmir, and he hastened back to Bajwara apparently in disgrace.

It was about this time that he was married. He had been betrothed in 1870, while he was only seven, to Thakar Devi, daughter of Lala Kirpa Ram Chaddha, a banker of Hadiabad in Kapurthala State. Of course it was not intended to celebrate the marriage at once. In 1875 Lala Kirpa Ram died. Pressure was now put on his widow to terminate this long-standing marriage engagement on account of the straitened circumstances of Lala Chuni Lal. Like a brave woman she refused to allow financial considerations to make her break her word. The marriage was duly solemnized in April, 1876 on an auspicious date which Lala Chuni Lal had helped to fix during his lifetime. Hansraj was now twelve. But the marriage did not mean that he was immediately to bear the burden of matrimony. Marriage then was more or less a religious ceremony productive of joy for the parents of the boy and the girl, rather than any indication that the boy was about to enter upon a householder's life. It was not until several years later that Hansraj brought his wife home after performing the ceremony called *Muklawa* as a sign that he had assumed the full responsibilities of marriage.

But much more important than the marriage was the question of finding some means of livelihood. Hansraj now turned truculent. Was he not twelve ? Were not young boys of his age working as shop assistants or helping their families in other productive capacities ? More important than all these considerations was the fact that he seems to have had an exaggerated idea about the family property. Then followed a serious quarrel between Mulkraj and Hansraj, the first and the last of its kind in the life of Hansraj. He refused to go to school and demanded his share of the family property. Even when it was discovered that his share would not amount to much more than some debts, Hansraj still did not yield. Perhaps he argued that with whatever he got, he would be able to start life as a petty shopkeeper. But the Fates must have been laughing in their sleeves at his presumption. The boy who, later in life, was literally to become a means of imparting education to thousands annually, was himself refusing to receive education! Lala Mulkraj exercised the undoubted right of an elder brother by using an argument which Hansraj could not easily gainsay. He resorted to force, whereupon Hansraj yielded, and became a student of the Government High School, Hoshiarpur.

The change that now came over him was remarkable. It was probably not education as such that he had been objecting to, in refusing to go to school. Once there, he became a model boy and gained the good opinion of his teachers for his praiseworthy behaviour. Within three months of his admission came the annual prize distribution of the school, and Hansraj, if he could not win a prize for his school work, secured one as the best- behaved boy in his class.

He was not, however, destined to remain there for long. In 1877 his brother Mulkraj passed the

Entrance Examination of the Punjab University College. He had secured a scholarship of nine rupees a month, standing seventh in the province. This enabled him to join the Punjab University College at Lahore. Fees were small, and expenses compared with to-day very insignificant, but, after attending College for about nine months, he gave up his higher studies in favour of the more prosaic work of becoming the bread-winner for the family. He joined the Post Office as an apprentice on November 4, 1878, on a modest monthly allowance of Rs. 10. This was raised to Rs. 20 a month when he was appointed to fill a vacancy which soon occurred. Naturally the family now moved to Lahore and thus in 1879 Hansraj found himself at the capital of the province.

The first question was that of Hansraj's education. Even the metropolitan city of Lahore could then boast of only two English High Schools—a Government School and another maintained by the American Presbyterian Mission. He was admitted into the Government High School which, however, he left some months later after falling ill. On his recovery, he joined the Mission School in the eighth class. He soon came to the top of the class and in 1879 he passed the Anglo-Vernacular Middle School Examination thus finishing in three years the work that usually took five.

Many stories have been preserved which show how intelligent he was at this time. Once he went to buy a Manual of Arithmetic from Munshi Gulab Singh, the founder of the bookselling firm of Rai Sahib Munshi Gulab Singh & Sons, Lahore. Rather playfully the bookseller, who knew him, promised to make a present of the book to him if he would solve a problem. Undaunted, Hansraj accepted the challenge. A rather difficult question was given to him for solution, but he succeeded in

solving it. True to his promise, Munshi Gulab Singh gave him the book free of cost.

It was here in the Mission School that young Hansraj gave the earliest proof of his qualities as a tough fighter. While he was in the ninth class, the Headmaster, Mr. R. C. Dass, began making some disparaging remarks about the Vedic civilization and the early religion of the Hindus. It was neither unnatural nor extraordinary and the Headmaster might have done it scores of times without any unpleasantness. But unluckily for him, this occasion happened to be uncommon. Hansraj was a member of the class! He at once joined issues with his teacher and challenged his remarks. The Headmaster became upset, though it seems that he had made these remarks deliberately in a controversial spirit. Neither the Headmaster nor Hansraj was conversant with even the secondary authorities on the subject about which they were so hotly quarrelling. Neither of them, however, was willing to recede from his position. The Headmaster asked Hansraj for his authorities. Nothing abashed, Hansraj quoted an Urdu *Reader* then in use, which declared that the *Vedas* preached the worship of one God. The Headmaster had nothing better to offer in support of his statement than an English *Reader* which also was then being used in the class. Such a duel could have but one result in a missionary institution in those days. It was too much to expect that the missionary Headmaster would allow the school to be used for propaganda which might easily destroy the missionary influence on the boys. Hansraj was caned and expelled—but not for long. The Headmaster was sorry to lose such a good student for so trivial a matter. Hansraj had never given any cause of complaint against him to any of his teachers. The Headmaster, therefore, was easily prevailed upon to overlook the ardent championship of his own

religion by Hansraj, and allow him once more to attend his classes.

But to Hansraj and some of his class-fellows, particularly Amar Nath Khanna (later Rai Bahadur Amar Nath Khanna of Lahore), this incident came as an eye-opener. They began to get a little dissatisfied with the scheme of things under which they were receiving education. As students, they could not afford to challenge all the unflattering remarks about Hindu religion or Hindu religious thought which were made almost daily by their missionary teachers. Thus began a yearning towards a freer atmosphere and more congenial surroundings, where Hindu students would not have to pay such a high price for the benefit of receiving an English education.

In December, 1880, Hansraj passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University from the Mission High School. He was probably the one successful candidate out of seventeen sent up from the school. His elder brother, Lala Mulkraj, felt that if he had been compelled to deny himself higher education on account of adverse pecuniary circumstances, he must not allow this to stand in the way of his younger brother's receiving it. He was getting a very small salary, Rs. 30 a month, at this time. But the fees in the University College were not heavy either—Rs. 2 a month. Books and other incidental expenses did not amount to much. Government, further awarded scholarships "to one out of every four candidates who are successful in the Entrance examination of the Calcutta University." Hansraj could easily secure one of these scholarships by joining the Punjab University College, which he did in January, 1881.

The Punjab University College was a small institution established at Lahore to provide a centre of higher education developing into a University in due course. It prepared students for the various

examinations of the Calcutta University, besides holding equivalent examinations of its own. The total number of students in 1881-1882 did not exceed 92. The staff was comparatively small consisting of Dr. G. W. Leitner, M.A., Ph.D., Principal, Pundit Bhagwan Das, Babu Shashi Bhushan Mukerji, M.A., Rai Sagar Chand, B.A., Mr. J. Sime, B.A., Dr. C. L. Stulpnagel, M.A., Ph.D., Maulvi Muhammad Husain, Shamasul-Ulama, Mr. J. C. Oman, M.A., Mr. F. Haden Cope, B.A., Professor Hirst, Lala Bhairon Parshad, Mr. T. M. Ghosh, M.A., Mr. T. C. Lewis, M.A., and Mr. J. W. D. Johnstone, B.A. Under the leadership of Dr. Leitner, or in his absence, of Mr. Sime, they did their best as pioneers of higher education in the Punjab. They were further helped by the fact that the Government was very anxious to provide employment in the public services to all those who received higher education. In 1880, for example, three distinguished graduates of the College had been selected for the 'Native Civil Service', to start their career as Extra Assistant Commissioners, the highest office then open to Indians who could not afford to go to England and compete successfully for the Indian Civil Service there.

Hansraj took full advantage of the opportunities that the University College offered him. He read English, Philosophy, Sanskrit and History for his Intermediate. In 1883, he was one of the 50 successful students who offered themselves for the First Arts Examination of the newly established Punjab University. He then rejoined the Punjab University College in the Degree classes, now offering English, History and Political Economy, Philosophy and Sanskrit. He was probably the only student offering History in the B.A. An arrangement was made between him and his teacher, Professor Hirst, whereby Hansraj undertook to do most of his work himself, so that the Professor had to lecture to him only when he felt disposed to do



House where Mahatma Hansraj was born

so. Classes in other subjects were not very large either. In 1885 he took his B.A. Examination, standing second among the successful candidates.

While at College he had, as his class-fellows and contemporaries, Raja Narendra Nath (for some time a Divisional Commissioner in the Punjab), Pundit Guru Datt Vidyarthi, (later on a Professor at Government College, Lahore), Lala Lajpat Rai, Pofessor Ruchi Ram Sahni, R. B. Sansar Chand and Khan Bahadur Sheikh Inam Ali (both of whom afterwards retired as Sessions and District Judges), Bakhshi Jaishi Ram, Rai Shiv Nath, Rai Bahadur Mr. Kunj Behari Thapar and Lala Chetan Anand. Of these he came into intimate contact with Guru Datt, Lajpat Rai and Narendra Nath. He knew Sansar Chand already as his fellow townsman. Rai Bahadur Mulraj was his senior by many years. He was known to Hansraj as the foremost Arya Samajist and the only Punjabee to win the highest academic honour in India, the Premchand Roychand Scholarship of the Calcutta University. Many of the friendships formed at this time survived the college days and provided Hansraj with some of his most intimate associates in life.

Hansraj made the best of his opportunities. He studied his subjects diligently and well. For Sanskrit and History he developed a special taste, and in English he early acquired the habit of writing accurately, forcefully, and clearly. He became a member of the Philosophic Club founded in 1882 by his friend, Pundit Guru Datt, to discuss religious and philosophic questions. Pundit Guru Datt became its Secretary. Hansraj is mentioned as one of its active members. He gave an early proof of his ability to attack snobbery, when, on entering College he along with Pundit Guru Datt refused to speak Urdu outside the class rooms and boldly preferred to use Punjabi.

The College Library was small, but the only place at Lahore where books on serious subjects could be procured. Of public lectures on popular or technical subjects nothing was then known. Thus much of the intellectual atmosphere, which an average student at Lahore is able to take advantage of to-day, was conspicuously lacking. But if there were no aids to study, there were still fewer distractions. Musical concerts, cinemas, and dancing exhibitions were unknown. Once in a while, a theatrical company might think of visiting Lahore. But this was a rare event and the seats cost so much that an average student like Hansraj never thought of going to the theatre. The college life of the student was mostly taken up by his studies and such games as might attract him.

Lala Mulkraj had been transferred to Multan before Hansraj matriculated. Even though the hostel life was not so expensive then as now, Hansraj had not been able to join the hostel. He started living in private lodgings with some other students, as this was cheaper. Lala Rala Ram of Bajwara, Lala Chetan Anand of Multan and Pundit Guru Datt were for some time his fellow-lodgers. At one time when he was able to rent a room all to himself, it was so small that he could hardly lie down in comfort. He secured a tuition or two to help him through college. Lala Mulkraj sent him as much of his scanty salary as he could afford after meeting his own expenses. Hansraj had thus to supplement the allowance his brother made him. Naturally, he lived a simple life. One of his contemporaries can even to-day well recall the sensation Hansraj produced when he appeared dressed in a new white *achakan* which his brother had sent him.

Limited though his means were, Hansraj, learnt to save something even at this stage, so that he was able to help some of his less fortunate contemporaries at College.

The Punjab University College had by this time shifted to its present building. It lay outside the walled city of Lahore. The *Gol Bagh* which now lies across the road had not yet come into existence. In its place stood a wild and dense growth of trees which did not add to the amenities of the College. Most of the day students came from within the city and for them the college lay at the edge of the inhabited portion of Lahore. There were two hostels, one for the Hindus, another for the Muslims. Neither of them was well-organized or well-run.

Thus outside the class-rooms, the students had few chances of developing any community life. It was, however, rather a mixed flock that gathered at the College at this time; students reading not only for the Arts and Science Examinations, but for law, medicine and teaching as well. Of course most of them were not only sure that they would get good posts in the Public Services but actually secured them. The College Report for the year 1879-80 could proudly declare that out of 34 students who left the College in 1880, all were able to secure government appointments except those who decided to practise law. Naturally, the relations between the students and their professors were usually very happy.

By the time he graduated in 1885, Hansraj had learnt as much as the College had to teach him. He had been brought into close contact with Dr. Leitner, Dr. Sime, Dr. Hirst, Pundit Bhagwan Das and Lala Sagar Chand. Though he did not become a favourite with any one of them, Hansraj did enough work to be considered a good student. There was, however, a side of his activities which was neither understood nor appreciated by some of them, and which at one time brought him into slight difficulties with at least one of them. But of this more in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

Early Contact with the Arya Samaj

When Hansraj moved to Lahore as a young student in 1879, the capital of the province had recently witnessed an epoch-making event. In 1877, Swami Dayanand visited Lahore as the harbinger of a new life to the Hindu community. He had begun his career as a zealous reformer and religious propagandist as early as 1863. The next twelve years he spent in moving from place to place and preaching his gospel wherever he went. In 1875, he felt the need of setting up a permanent organization for the purpose of propagating the truth as he saw it. On April 10, 1875, at a public meeting held in Bombay, the principles of what was now designated as the Arya Samaj were announced. These principles formed a combination of religious beliefs and directions for personal action and public organization. Swami Dayanand now spent his time in religious discussions, sermons, literary activities and the like. At the time of the Imperial Durbar held at Delhi in 1877, he met many religious leaders—among them Mr. Navin Chandra Roy, Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Munshi Kanahya Lal Alakhdhari and Babu Harish Chandra Chintamani. At Swami Dayanand's suggestion an attempt was made here to correlate the reforming activities of the various Indian reformers. Unluckily nothing definite came of this well-meant effort, but it led to Swami Dayanand's being invited to the Punjab by some of the eminent Punjabees present there. In accordance with the promise then made, Swami Dayanand came to the Punjab in March, 1877.

After visiting Ludhiana and spending a night at Jullundur, he reached Lahore on April 19, 1877. Here he followed his usual programme of religious discourses and public discussions. His main work was, however, done in personal discussions with such seekers after knowledge as cared to interest themselves in these questions. The result was a revision of the earlier 'Principles of the Arya Samaj.' An Arya Samaj was also established at Lahore. The list of the first members of the Arya Samaj is very suggestive and shows the hold that Swami Dayanand was able to acquire on the educated community of Lahore. It included Lala Mulraj M.A. as its President, Lala Sri Ram M.A. as Vice-President, Lala Bishan Lal M.A. as Joint Secretary, Bhagat Ishar Das M.A., Lala Hansraj Sawhney, Vakil, Lala Ishar Das B.A., Lala Dwarka Das, M.A., Dr. Khazan Chand and Dr. Bhagat Ram Sawhney as members; Babu Sarda Prasad Bhattacharya, Lala Jiwan Dass and Lala Sain Das, Translator, Secretariat, Lahore, were the three Secretaries. Thus the year 1877 saw a religious revolution in the Punjab.

"Dayanand was a hero of the *Iliad*, or of the *Gita*, with the athletic strength of a Hercules, who thundered against all forms of thought other than his own—the only true one. It was impossible to get the better of him, for he was possessed of unrivalled knowledge of Sanskrit and the *Vedas*, while the burning vehemence of his words brought his adversaries to nought. Never since Shankar, had such a prophet of Vedism appeared. His international Indian theism, in itself steel-forged from the pure metal of the *Vedas* alone, had nothing in common with the Brahmo Samaj.

"Westernism had been going too far and was not always revealed by its best side. Intellectually it became rather a frivolous attitude of mind which did away with the need for independence of thought

and transplanted young intelligence from their proper environments, teaching them to despise the genius of their race. The highest religious spirit of India was so weakened that the religious spirit of Europe threatened to extinguish its feeble flame. Dayanand alone hurled the defiance of India against her invaders. He was a ruthless critic of all who, according to him, had falsified or profaned the true Vedic religion. Dayanand transfused into the languid body of India his own formidable energy, his certainty, his lion's blood. His words rang with heroic power. He set an example of complete clearance of all the encumbering growth of privileges and prejudice by a series of hatchet blows. His social activities and practices were of intrepid boldness and he was the most vigorous force of the immediate and present action in India at the moment of re-birth and re-awakening of the national consciousness."

Such, in the words of Romain Rolland, was the great seer. No wonder he fired his followers with similar enthusiasm for social service and the uplift of their fellow beings in general and the Hindus in particular.

It was about this time that Hansraj came in contact with Lala Sain Das, the most dynamic personality in the Arya Samaj at that time and Secretary of the Arya Samaj at Lahore. Lala Sain Das had a naturally inquisitive mind in religious matters. In 1873, he had become a member of the Sat Sabha where Pundit Shraddha Ram Phalouri used to draw large audiences to his religious discourses. When the Arya Samaj was founded in 1877, he was appointed its Secretary; in 1880 he became the President, a position which he held till his death in 1890.

Though a Government Servant, Lala Sain Das was of a strong national and independent bent of mind. In 1887, at the time of the Queen's Jubilee

it was proposed to start a Jubilee Fund and name a wing of the Dayanand College after the Queen. He stoutly opposed the proposal. When everything else failed, he resorted to the technical objection that the matter was not on the agenda, and thus succeeded in ruling out its consideration.

Nationalist though he was in thought, the Arya Samaj occupied the supreme place in his heart. In the earliest days of the Indian National Congress, it was suggested by some Arya Samajists that the Arya Samaj should also send its representatives to the Congress, but Lala Sain Das refused to convert the Arya Samaj into a subordinate organization of the Congress and declined to entertain the proposal.

The student world of Lahore was then astir with religious ferment. Educated Indians were very much influenced by the religious problems raised by English education. The various reform movements made a natural appeal to their troubled minds. They were as assiduous in attending religious discourses as their successors to-day are in political lectures. To the patriotic Hindus in the Punjab, it seemed as if the country was facing a very serious danger. The West appeared to be threatening the East so menacingly that there did not seem to be much hope left for Eastern ideals. English education had come as a solvent for all sorts of beliefs then tenaciously held. The work of the missionaries threatened to complete what English education had begun.

The Punjab was thus in the throes of a religious revival. The Brahmo Samaj had acquired some hold on the educated Punjabees. It provided no answer, however, to the yearnings of religiously minded young men, who were not prepared to submit to the West to the extent to which the Brahmo Samaj seemed to them to be submitting. The

establishment of the Arya Samaj at Lahore provided such young men with an opportunity to fulfil their heart's desire by joining a movement which was not only capable of standing against the double shock of attack from English education and missionary propaganda, but was also able to satisfy their patriotic instincts, by standing on its own ground, rather than on anything borrowed from the West. Hansraj had given an early indication of his religious inclinations when he had learnt at Ajnoha the *Gayatri Mantra* (the most cherished of Vedic prayers) and started reciting it five hundred times a day. With other young men he now joined the Arya Samaj. What it implied can be judged from the following description given by Lala Lajpat Rai in his *Autobiography* where he describes his own admission into the Arya Samaj.

"In November or December, 1882, I attended the Arya Samaj for the first time. The Anniversary of the Arya Samaj was then being celebrated. Lala Madan Singh was to speak that day. He was very kind to me. Before delivering his address he took me to the roof of the Arya Samaj and showed me the manuscript of his speech 'The Origin of the Arya Samaj and its Future'. He asked me to read it and give my opinion thereon. I told him that I liked it very much. When I came down the roof, Lala Sain Das caught hold of me and took me aside and said, 'We have been waiting for long to see you come over to us.'

"I cannot forget that memorable moment. He was talking to me, but all the time he kept his eyes fixed on me. I told him that I was with the Arya Samaj. No sooner had I said this then he called for an admission form of the Arya Samaj and placed it before me for signature. I took some time to consider the matter, but he insisted that he would not let me go till I had signed the form. Thereupon, I signed it immediately. I can-

not adequately describe the thrill of pleasure that his face bore at that time. It seemed as if he had got the kingdom of Hindustan. At once he sent for Pundit Guru Datt and told him the story. He was very pleased. After Lala Madan Singh's address, Lala Sain Das asked Pundit Guru Datt and myself to address the audience. I remember the enthusiastic and repeated cheers that I got. Almost every sentence was loudly cheered. I came home drunk with success and intoxicated with pleasure."

If Lala Lajpat Rai's admission into the Arya Samaj was a turning point in his life, that of Lala Hansraj was no less pregnant with possibilities. It seems that Guru Datt and Hansraj, class-fellows as they were in the college, were drawn towards the Arya Samaj at about the same time. Pundit Guru Datt remained somewhat of an agnostic for some time after his admission into the Arya Samaj. Hansraj, however, once he was admitted into the Samaj, did so without any reservations or misgivings. What seems to have drawn him in company with other young men to the Arya Samaj was its patriotic appeal. Swami Dayanand had made the Arya Samaj not only a covering section of the Hindu defence, he had turned it into an arm of offence as well. His was no apologetic attitude. What the critics attacked in Hinduism as superstitious, illogical and irreligious, he boldly threw over as the accretions of centuries of Hindu degeneration. Adopting the cry of '*Back to the Vedas*', he presented a vision of India's glorious past as glorious as, if not more glorious than, any vision that the West could hold out before its votaries at that time. What a hold the Arya Samaj soon obtained over Hansraj can best be described in his own words :—

"We were standing in the verandah outside the Government College lawn. All of us were students of the First Year Class, having just joined the College after passing the Matriculation Ex-

amination. Lala Chetan Anand who had topped the list of successful candidates was there. His class-fellows, Pundit Guru Datt, who had passed from the Multan Government School, and two students from the eastern Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Shiv Nath, were also present. All of us were Arya Samajists by faith, but we wanted to test the depth of one another's convictions. Pundit Guru Datt questioned me as to how the use of the first person in the first hymn of the *Rigveda* could be reconciled with the divine nature of the scripture and was satisfied when I told him that the first person was used by the Lord to teach mankind how they should pray to him. As the father of Lala Lajpat Rai was believed to hold opinions differing from the Arya Samaj, Lala Lajpat Rai was tested as to his belief in the revelation of the *Vedas* and the mission of the Arya Samaj. He satisfied us and all of us felt that we were brothers in faith, that we should do something to further the mission of the great *Rishi*, Swami Dayanand, and spread the tenets of the sacred scripture which he had expounded so well."

Shortly after the anniversary of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, towards the end of the year 1882, Lala Salig Ram, proprietor of the Arya Press, proposed that two newspapers, one in English and another in Urdu be started at his cost to further the cause of the Arya Samaj. Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Hansraj, Pandit Guru Datt Vidyarthi and Lala Shiv Nath examined the proposal and decided to start an English weekly and call it the *Regenerator of Arya Varta*. It was understood that the real charge of the paper was to be in the hands of Lala Hansraj who was to work both as the Manager and the Joint Editor with Pundit Guru Datt as his colleague. The young editors were to work without any remuneration on the understanding that the profits, if any, were to go to the funds of the Arya Samaj. The *Regenerator of Arya Varta* thus became an un-

official organ of the Arya Samajists of Lahore and Hansraj its first editor. It was a great distinction. Indian journalists writing in English then were not many, and for a young man still at College to assume the charge of an English weekly may have appeared to be nothing short of presumptuousness. It was not that the Arya Samajists had none others with higher educational qualifications. The list of the first members of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, given above, bears ample testimony to the fact that the Arya Samaj had drawn a large number of highly cultured persons into its ranks. The Arya Samajists of Lahore must have been attracted by something in this raw young man before they could allow him to run their only means of propaganda among the English-knowing classes. It must have been with some sense of trepidation that the experiment was begun. As soon as Hansraj had written his first article for the journal, a Bengalee member of the Lahore Arya Samaj took it to the Headmaster of the Mission High School, Lahore,—whether as a specimen of what one of his former students was capable of doing, or as a sort of a triumphant challenge that a young Arya Samajist could turn out so well-written an article, is uncertain. The result, however, was more than gratifying. The learned missionary suggested that if 'sleep' was changed into 'slumber' where it occurred in the article, it would form a very good example not only of correct English but of a well-written and clearly expressed article as well. Thus encouraged, Hansraj started on his first labour of love in the service of the Arya Samaj, becoming probably the first Punjabee editor of an English weekly. Lala Hansraj's connection with this paper continued for about two years. He took his work as an editor seriously and never spared even those in authority when they roused him. This brought him into conflict with Dr. Sime on one occasion when he wrote an article on the Government College, Lahore, in

the *Regenerator*. Dr. Sime took public notice of the article in the class of which Hansraj was a member. The young editor, however, had learnt wisdom from his first encounter in the class with his teacher in the Mission School. He listened silently to what Dr. Sime had to say, but continued his work undaunted.

It had been understood from the very beginning that neither Hansraj nor Guru Datt was to receive any remuneration for the work he did in the service of the Arya Samaj. They interpreted this obligation so strictly that both of them paid for their own copies of the paper! The venture was a great success financially. The proprietor, however, refused to part with the profits to the Lahore Arya Samaj as he had agreed to do in the beginning. This led to a good deal of bickering. At one stage, Lala Salig Ram offered to pay a monthly salary to the editors for their past and future labours. This was indignantly refused on the ground that the work had been undertaken as a labour of love in the service of the Arya Samaj. Naturally this brought to an end Hansraj's editorship of the paper, which was soon followed by its disappearance.

Hansraj's work for the *Regenerator* brought him into active contact with the members of the Arya Samaj at Lahore. The Arya Samaj was at that time a thoroughly militant body. Its members were not content with adapting themselves to a path which seemed to beckon to them across four thousand years; they made it their business to advocate the cause of reform wherever they found it necessary. By this contact with the Arya Samaj, Hansraj was plunged into a conflict that was at that time raging in the Punjab. The establishment of the Arya Samaj at Lahore had shaken orthodoxy to its very foundations. No less profound was the effect produced on those who were swimming with the western tide. As the editor of

the *Regenerator of Arya Varta*, it became the duty of young Hansraj to direct many of the public controversies that began to rage round the position which the Arya Samaj had assumed in various matters, social and religious. Most of its opinions and beliefs were a constant challenge to smug orthodoxy. It claimed that every one, whatever his social status, had the right of access to the Hindu scriptures, the *Vedas*. This was a direct challenge to the predominance of the Brahmans, which mainly rested upon the denial to a very large section of the Hindu community of any approach to their scriptures except through their own instrumentality. The *Regenerator* took an active part in broadcasting Vedic truths. It further made an incessant war on many of the superstitious beliefs, so tenaciously held at that time. It was intended to make it a popular forum where all questions that might interest the Arya Samaj could be discussed.

As a student of Sanskrit, Hansraj was also drawn to the study of Swami Dayanand's translation of the *Vedas*. Beginning with Swami Dayanand's *Introduction to the Commentary on the Rig and the other Vedas* (ऋग्वेदादि भाष्य भूमिका) Hansraj tried to understand Swami Dayanand's stand in the matter. For, it would have to be admitted that Dayanand's interpretation of the *Vedas* was a definite challenge to the traditional methods of Vedic interpretation. As Aurobindo Ghosh puts it :—

"And what an act of grandiose intellectual courage to lay hold upon this scripture, defaced by ignorant comment and oblivion of its spirit, degraded by misunderstanding to the level of an ancient document of barbarism, and to perceive in it its real worth as a scripture which conceals in itself the deep and energetic spirit of the forefathers who made this country and nation,—a scripture of divine knowlege, divine worship,

divine action. He had the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole education of youth, a whole manhood and a whole nationhood.

"Dayanand accepted the *Veda* as his rock of firm foundation, he took it for his guiding view of life, his rule of inner existence and his inspiration for external work, but he regarded it as even more, the word of eternal Truth on which man's knowledge of God and his relations with the Divine Being and with his fellows can be rightly and securely founded.

"While Western scholarship extending the hints of Sayana seemed to have classed it for ever as a ritual liturgy to nature-gods, the genius of the race, looking through the eyes of Dayanand, pierced behind the error of many centuries and received again the intuition of a timeless revelation and a divine truth given to humanity.

"An interpretation of the *Veda* must stand or fall by its central conception of the Vedic religion and the amount of support given to it by the intrinsic evidence of the *Veda* itself. Here Dayanand's view is quite clear, its foundation inexpugnable. The Vedic hymns are chanted to the One Deity under many names, names which are used and even designed to express His qualities and powers. Was this conception of Dayanand's an arbitrary conceit fetched out of his own too ingenious imagination? Not at all; it is the explicit statement of the *Veda* itself: 'One existent, sages'— not the ignorant, mind you, but the seers, the men of knowledge—' speak of in many ways, as Indra, as Yama, as Matariswan, as Agni'. The Vedic *Rishis* ought surely to have known something about their own religion, more, let us hope, than Roth or Max Muller, and this is what they knew.

"But if this fundamental point of Dayanand's is granted, if the character given by Vedic *Rishis*

themselves to their gods is admitted, we are bound, whenever the hymns speak of Agni or another, to see behind that name present always to the thought of *Rishi* the one Supreme Deity or else one of His powers with its attendant qualities of workings. Immediately the whole character of the *Veda* is fixed in the sense Dayanand gave to it; the merely ritual, mythological, polytheistic interpretation of Sayana collapses, the merely meteorological and naturalistic European interpretation collapses. We have, instead, a real Scripture, one of the world's sacred books and the divine word of lofty and noble religion.

"The cosmic element is not less conspicuous in the *Veda*: the *Rishis* speak always of the worlds, the firm laws that govern them, the divine workings in the cosmos. But Dayanand goes farther; he affirms that the truths of modern physical science are discoverable in the hymns. Here we have the sole point of fundamental principle about which there can be any justifiable misgivings. I confess my incompetence to advance any settled opinion in the matter. But this must needs to be said that his idea is increasingly supported by the recent trend of our knowledge about the ancient world. The ancient civilizations did possess secrets of science, some of which modern knowledge has recovered, extended and made more rich and precise but others are even now not recovered. There is then nothing fantastic in Dayanand's idea that the *Veda* contains truths of science as well as truth of religion. I will even add my own conviction that *Veda* contains the other truths of a science the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case Dayanand has rather understated than overstated the depth and range of the Vedic wisdom.

"If, as Dayanand held on strong enough grounds, the *Veda* reveals to us God, reveals to us the law of Nature, reveals to us the relations of the soul to

God and Nature, what is it but a revelation of divine Truth? And if, as Dayanand held, it reveals them to us with a perfect truth flawlessly, he might well hold it for an infallible Scripture."

It was this attitude towards the *Vedas* that Hansraj imbibed from his study of Swami Dayanand's works, when he left College as a young graduate. How this was to shape his life we shall discuss in the next chapter?



Lala Mulkraj

CHAPTER III

CHOICE OF A CAREER

While Hansraj was busy graduating, the Punjab was passing through a very important phase in its history. The sudden death of Swami Dayanand on 30th October, 1883 came as a surprising shock to the Hindus in the Punjab as elsewhere. As the Arya Samajists sat watching by the bed-side of the great *Rishi* when he was calmly surrendering his soul to his Maker, several of them were moved by a passionate desire to do something solid to further the cause he had so much at heart. As soon as Pundit Guru Datt and Lala Jiwan Das returned to Lahore from Ajmer the question of raising a suitable memorial to the Great Departed was raised. The *Regenerator of Arya Varta* published a letter from Lala Madan Singh (later on to become the first secretary of the D. A.-V. College Managing Committee) in its issue of November 5, which first publicly discussed the question. He said :—

" Public sympathy is highly excited and it is the general wish to raise some substantial and useful memorial as a sign of our heartfelt gratitude to the noble and holy regenerator of the Arya Varta. But the memorial must be as lofty and as useful as the high personage, whom we want to commemorate, himself was. In my opinion anything less than an Anglo-Vedic College, where the *Vedas* may be taught side by side with other learning, will be far beneath the dignity of the illustrious soul. It would be a work which the most revered Swami Ji would have approved and it will be a memorial that will always keep his memory fresh and prove as useful as the Swami himself was in his life time.

"I have consulted many sympathizers on this proposal and all seem to agree with me and promise to give as much help as lies in their power."

A public meeting was called for the purpose of discussing this question on November 8, 1883 at Lahore. The *Regenerator* (edited by Hansraj and Guru Datt at the time) thus described the meeting in its issue for November 12, 1883.

"Great expectations are proverbially but too often fallacious in themselves, and in their effects vexatious and disappointing. Such may be the prevailing rule, and yet it may admit the most signal exceptions to its operation. And certainly if we had been led to expect great things from the meeting held on the evening of Thursday, 8th November at the Hall of the local Arya Samaj, the event itself not only realized but proved to be far in advance of even our most sanguine anticipations and hopes. This meeting was one of those complete successes that occasionally crown first efforts. When the speakers had related the circumstances of Swami Ji's death and appealed to the audience for donations to establish an Anglo-Vedic College in honour of the deceased's name, and for the good of the country, all present were moved, and every one from the young to the aged sire, came forward with his mite to raise the proposed memorial. Some of the poor shopkeepers and menials who have to live from hand to mouth were to be seen pressing forward to add what little they could to the funds. Some of the ladies present were not slow to contribute. The amount raised in this single meeting exceeded Rs. 7,000.

"Considering the animation which at present prevails among the Hindu community here, it is not too much to hope that more than a lac of rupees will be raised from the Hindus (Aryas) at Lahore."

Soon after, the following appeal was circulated by Lala Lal Chand, President of the Provisional

Collections Committee which had been set up by the Lahore Arya Samaj.

"India is in mourning. One of her greatest sons has passed away. Swami Dayanand Saraswati is dead. After a month of suffering, he gave up his spirit to God on the 30th October last. The news fell like thunder on the ears of his numerous followers and the Indian community at large. And no wonder. He was one of the best friends and most sincere well-wishers. It was not his followers alone, but the whole of India that reaped the benefit of his labours. The one mission of Swami Dayanand Saraswati's life was to preach the sublime truths of the *Vedas* among mankind, and to dissuade us from the path of error; he devoted all his unbounded energies to the fulfilment of that great mission. Arya Varta, the land of heroism, of philosophy, of sciences and arts, was sunk deep in ignorance, superstition and moral degradation, and urgently needed the hand of a true reformer to arouse it. Swami Dayanand Saraswati saw her fallen condition, his heart, full of the old fire, wept and with the zeal of a true reformer he earnestly applied himself to the work of regeneration. He travelled from place to place, he discussed, he taught, he lectured, and he practised what he taught. His keen intellect, his learning, his indomitable perseverance, his undaunted courage, his unswerving zeal, his single-minded earnestness, his thorough self-abnegation, his overpowering logic and honesty of purpose carried conviction deep to their hearts. He shook the very foundations of superstition and ignorance, and gave a deadly blow to those evils which have been eating into the vitals of our society. He initiated a course of reform, which promises to be enduring and to bear the highest fruit. He established the Arya Samajes, now spreading over the whole face of the country, which bears a standing testimony to his power of mind and his work as a great reformer. It would be impossible

nor would it be desirable, to enumerate here all that he did during his lifetime. Suffice it to say that among the various forces that have been incessantly working for the good of our country, his influence occupied a very prominent place.

"Such a man is now no more. The temporal life has, alas, ceased to breathe; but the spiritual and moral good done by it to the country still exists amongst us and with us. It demands that in deep gratitude to his revered memory some memorial be raised to his honour, which may visibly typify his life by being as great as he was, and as useful as his own work. It has, accordingly, been proposed to establish in his honour an Anglo-Vedic College, which by diffusing the light of western culture and knowledge, and unveiling the hidden treasures of Vedic lore, will, at the same time, remove a long-felt want. Such a College would not only be a fitting memorial to one who spent his whole life for the enlightenment of his countrymen, would not only help to continue the work of reform, but will also prove of immense service to the country as a model, independent, and self-relying educational institution."

A little later the following draft scheme prepared by Lala Lal Chand, was circulated for opinion among some prominent Arya Samajists.

"The rush of foreign ideas, by the introduction of English Literature into this country, has had no doubt the effect of enlightening and improving many thousand minds, of a few of whom the country may well feel proud. But foreign education has produced a schism in the society which is truly deplorable. An educated class has been created, a class which moves by itself, a class incapable of materially influencing, or being influenced by, the uneducated masses, and a class without precedent in any country on the earth. This result, sad in itself, is the inevitable consequence of the one-

sided policy of education imparted through a foreign agency for whom it was simply impossible to appreciate the indigenous wants, and to supply a suitable method.

"But the mistake is not past remedy; there is still ample time to set matters right, did we but know how to use our opportunities. The reaction towards national education is asserting itself everywhere, and the demand for the study of national literature is growing. This points out to us the remedy, namely to make provision for the efficient study of the national language and literature, and carefully to initiate the youthful mind into habits and modes of life consistent with the national spirit and character. We are not unaware that there are at present institutions in the Punjab, as the Lahore Oriental College, which profess to give learned education in Sanskrit, but the education imparted in these institutions is as one-sided, and therefore as defective, as the education in the Government institutions which profess to give a thorough training through the medium of English language. But what is still more important is that an all but exclusive attention is paid to the study of the degenerate period of Sanskrit Literature. The Classical period, wherein lie deep buried and crystalized the fruits of whole lives spent in secluded meditation on the nature of soul, of virtue, of creation, of matter, and so far as can be vouchsafed to man, of the Creator, is entirely ignored in these institutions.

"Besides, no means exist at present in this country for imparting technical and practical education, which is so essential to its economic and material progress.

"Influenced by these important considerations we propose to establish an educational institution which will supply the shortcomings of the existing system and combine their advantages. The primary object will, therefore, be to weld together

the educated and uneducated masses by encouraging study of the national language and vernaculars; to spread a knowledge of moral and spiritual truths by insisting on the study of classical Sanskrit; to assist the formation of sound and energetic habits by a regulated mode of living, to encourage sound acquaintance with English Literature and to afford a stimulus to the material progress of the country by spreading a knowledge of the physical and applied sciences."

It was one thing, however, to display enthusiasm in the meeting and quite another to translate that enthusiasm into action. With the insight, born of their own experience as educated Hindus, the Arya Samajists had been able to decide upon a form of memorial which should not only serve as a useful instrument in their own hands but also fulfil an acutely felt need of the times as well. Ever since the establishment of the Arya Samaj at Lahore, attempts had been made to spread knowledge, as enjoined upon all the Arya Samajists in one of the *Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj.* A Scientific Academy was at one time started but of its labours we know very little. It was now decided to establish a Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College as a humble token of his countrymen's gratefulness to the Great Departed. The draft scheme for the proposed college was circulated, wherein Rs. 500 a month was provided as the salary of the Principal of the College and Rs. 250 as that of the Headmaster of the School. It was estimated that a capital of Rs. 8,00,000 would be necessary for the literal side of the proposed D. A.-V. College alone.

With the best of the wills in the world, it was not possible for the small number of the Arya Samajists, who belonged mostly to the middle class, to raise such a large sum. Various measures were, therefore, adopted to collect the money. But all these efforts

had not succeeded in obtaining more than Rs. 10,000 by the middle of October, 1885.

It was then that the question took a new turn. Young Hansraj who had graduated in 1885 had for some time been considering the question of choosing a career for himself. He had had a taste of Government Service when his elder brother was transferred from the Post Office to the Railway Department, and he had for a time filled his brother's place in the Post Office. He now flatly refused to enter Government Service. The only thing that seemed to appeal to him was the office of a Prime Minister in some independent Hindu State!

But now the question of making the proposed Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College a reality suddenly took complete possession of his mind. Could he do something effective to make this dream of the Arya Samajists come true? The great Swami had done so much for the regeneration of the Hindus. Could Hansraj, a humble follower of the great *Rishi*, make his own contribution so that the memory of Swami Dayanand's great work might be kept ever green?* He had subscribed Rs. 10 to the funds of the institution when the first public meeting was held to consider this question. But that was nothing and he had no more money to give.

After deep deliberation, Hansraj decided to open his mind to his elder brother, Lala Mulkraj. He told him how the idea of making the proposed Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College a success appealed to him and how it seemed to him that the proposal was hanging fire for the simple reason that not enough money was yet forthcoming. He was strongly drawn to the idea of working for the pro-

* We know the elders of the Arya Samaj had been entertaining high hopes of him. At the meeting of the Arya Samajists in the Arya Samaj Mandir immediately after the news of Swami Dayanand's death, Lala Sain Das had consoled the sorrowing Arya Samajists by suggesting that young men should be found to complete the Rishi's work. He had Lajpat Rai and Hansraj in view.

posed institution himself. As far as he was himself concerned, he would like to serve without remuneration, but this was an ideal which he could ill afford to translate into practice unaided. He was not a man of means whose wealth allowed him to indulge in whatever fancy caught his mind. Lala Mulkraj accepted his brother's suggestion with enthusiasm. By that time the fire, which was later to burn so passionately in his poetic outbursts, dramatic writings and *Book of Martyrs* had already taken hold of him. He enjoyed the confidence of many Arya Samajist leaders. It was he who was partly responsible for bringing Hansraj into close contact with Lala Sain Das. His acquaintance with Guru Datt while the latter was still at school at Multan had been responsible for drawing Guru Datt and Hansraj together in their first year's stay at the University College. He not only approved of his younger brother's intentions, but offered a way out of the difficulties which Hansraj had been trying in vain to surmount. He was drawing a meagre salary of Rs. 80 at that time. He very generously offered to share it equally with his younger brother, if, as he then seemed to contemplate, Hansraj would dedicate his life to the honorary service of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College. It is a tribute to the compatibility of temperament of both the brothers that no time was asked for considering the proposal and not a minute was spent by Lala Mulkraj in trying to argue his younger brother out of his grim resolve. It was not that the family was rich and, therefore, the two brothers could lightly agree to this course of action. Neither was it the commonplace nature of what young Hansraj was proposing that made it so easy for his elder brother to agree to his proposal. Such a course of action was as yet unheard of in the whole of India. Young Hansraj had a brilliant future before him had he chosen to follow any of the paths that the distinguished graduates of his generation

found it profitable to tread. As the Indian Education Commission of 1882 said :—

"Of the professions to which a student takes on leaving the college, the most favourite are Government service and the law. As a Government servant the ex-student is found everywhere and in all branches of administration, as a Clerk, as a Subordinate Judicial, Revenue, or Police Officer, as a Professor in a College, or teacher in a School, in various capacities in the Department of Public Works, the Forest Department, the Telegraph, the Railway and the Medical Service."

In the twenty years ending in 1883, only 4526 students had taken their Bachelors' and Masters' degrees from all the Universities of India. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Commission further declare :—

"In 1882 in Bengal there were 1623 Indian Officers holding public posts in the executive and judicial services. Out of this, only 542 were matriculates or had higher educational qualifications. In Madras and Bombay there were twice as many such posts as the number of matriculates or men with higher qualifications."

This continued to be true, even some time after 1885. The census report of 1891 gives a total of 3,36,032 persons knowing English in India, out of a population of 287 millions. This included only 15,626 graduates. In 1882 the total number of students receiving College education throughout India was recorded as 5399, and there is no reason to suppose that it had gone beyond 6,000 by the year 1885. The reports of the Indian Census of 1881 and 1891 seemed to suggest that there were more remunerative posts demanding the knowledge of English in their holders, than the number of matriculates turned out by the various Universities. Decent Government service could be secured by any graduate, if he cared to enter it. Indeed, there

had been a time, not very far away when the Principal of the University College at Lahore had had to complain that the lure of Government Service was proving too much for the students leading to very nearly empty classes. A graduate could rise high enough in Government Service. Under the circumstances, Hansraj had only to decide to join Government Service and he could have easily secured a post in the executive or the judicial branch. Some of his class-fellows, with less bright academic careers, easily secured posts, and later on came to occupy very eminent positions in the official world.

But neither Government Service nor any other lucrative profession seemed to appeal to Hansraj in this hour of his country's need. As he once declared, "the death of Swami Dayanand in October 1883, infused a new spirit into his soul and redoubled his desire to work for the cause of the Arya Samaj." "But when," to quote from the letter he wrote in 1911 when resigning the Honorary Principalship of the College—"His brother and he felt that in addition to the best efforts that were being put forth to raise a fitting memorial to Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the greatest sage of modern times, something more was needed to further the cause", which all the Arya Samajists had so much at heart, he decided, *Dadhichi-like*, to offer his own life as a sacrifice so that the cause of the gods might prosper.

Hansraj was then suffering from eye trouble and he was not able to write the letter communicating his decision to the President, Arya Samaj, Lahore. His elder brother wrote the letter for him and Hansraj put his sprawling signature at the bottom. He assured the Arya Samajists of Lahore that in the sacred cause which all of them wished so much to serve, he was prepared to work as the honorary Headmaster of the proposed school.

This letter electrified the atmosphere. Here was a way out, which none of the Arya Samajists could have dreamt of. Hansraj's example caught the imagination of one of his class-fellows and intimate friends, Lajpat Rai, who had already made a name for himself by the address which he had delivered in the mourning meeting held at Lahore. "Tears flowed from the eyes of the old and the young"—wrote Hansraj, who was himself present at the meeting—"When in an impassioned language he (Lajpat Rai) touched the heart chords of us all." He now approached Lala Hansraj with a plan to start the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School at once. With his own hands he put down in Hansraj's note-book his estimates about the income and expenditure of the proposed institution. Lala Hansraj was to be the Headmaster and Lala Lajpat Rai was to serve as the second master. But Fate declared otherwise.

The letter of Lala Hansraj was duly placed before the members of the Executive Committee of the Arya Samaj at Lahore on November 3, 1885. What followed can be best described in the words of Lala Lal Chand, M.A., the first President of the D. A.-V. College Managing Committee.

"The hot discussion that raged over this letter is known only to those who were present at that time.

"The matter was of a critical nature indeed. It was proposed by some that in order to give effect to the offer made by Lala Hansraj, the Arya Samaj Lahore, should at once start a school at Lahore with the funds held in its hands. Had this proposal been accepted there is little doubt that the prospects of the scheme would have been indefinitely postponed, if not altogether extinguished; as it would have then seriously weakened, if not altogether destroyed Arya Samajic cohesion. Happily for the movement, wiser counsels prevailed in the end

and it was resolved that no steps should be taken without consulting the Arya Samajes elsewhere. It was decided that Lala Hansraj should be thanked for his noble offer, with an intimation that an early opportunity would be taken to utilize his services."

Thus though Hansraj had solved his own problem, the Arya Samajists had yet to wait for some time before they could utilize his services.

CHAPTER IV

Foundation and Early Growth of the Dayanand College

When Swami Dayanand died, proposals to commemorate his unique services to the cause of Vedic religion and culture were simultaneously made in different parts of the country. The suggestion that the proposed memorial should take the form of a Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College institution appealed to the Arya Samajists in various parts of the country and money for it was raised in the Punjab, the North-Western Provinces (now the United Provinces), Rajputana and Sind. The question of the location of the memorial hung fire for some time. At one time Ajmer was suggested, on account of its associations with Swami Dayanand's last days and death. At another, Allahabad, sacred in Hindu tradition as Prayag, was also considered. As time went on, it was discovered that the Arya Samajes outside the Punjab did not contribute much to the funds of the proposed institution. This, probably, implied that to organize and start an institution elsewhere would be difficult, if not, impossible. The lead thus fell into the hands of the Arya Samajes in the Punjab who were mainly responsible for raising the funds. Here again, the question of locating the proposed institution remained undefined for some time. Indeed, the Multan Arya Samaj passed a resolution on February 13, 1885 refusing to collect subscriptions any further unless the question of the site was satisfactorily settled and a representative body was created for the purpose of running it. When Hansraj made his offer to serve as honorary Headmaster, it was to

the Secretary of the Lahore Arya Samaj that he addressed himself. But the Lahore Arya Samaj despite a proposal to the contrary, refused to open the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School at once because it was afraid that if it started the institution without first obtaining the necessary concurrence of the Arya Samajists and the Arya Samajes in the mofussil, it might produce disunity in the ranks of the Arya Samajists.

It was probably the demand of the Arya Samaj, Multan, for a constitution and the settlement of the question of the site that led to the framing of a constitution of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College Trust and Management Society by Lala Lal Chand, M.A., Pleader, Chief Court, Lahore. This was considered by the Lahore Arya Samaj on August 15, 1885 when it was decided to circulate the proposal among those interested. Not much, however, seems to have been done till the letter of Lala Hansraj was received. Then things began to move briskly. On November 3, his letter was considered by the Executive Committee, and on November 10, the draft constitution was laid before the same body. It was examined in detail in a series of nine meetings spread over two weeks. On November 29, the scheme was finally approved and it was resolved to print it and send it to the principal Arya Samajes for their opinion.

Meanwhile on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj in November, the offer of Lala Hansraj was made public. This Anniversary had even then acquired a provincial importance and the announcement electrified the Arya Samajic atmosphere. The Arya Samajists from the mofussil went home determined to discuss the question with brother Arya Samajists. The Lahore Arya Samaj invited the representatives of the principal Arya Samajes, which had taken an active interest in raising subscription for the move-

ment, to meet at Lahore on January 31, 1886. The Arya Samaj was then confined to so limited a circle that this meeting was attended by only nine representatives from six Arya Samajes—Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Gujranwala, Ludhiana and Rohtak. The Arya Samajes at Dehra Dun, Sukkur and Simla also sent ' letters of approval.'

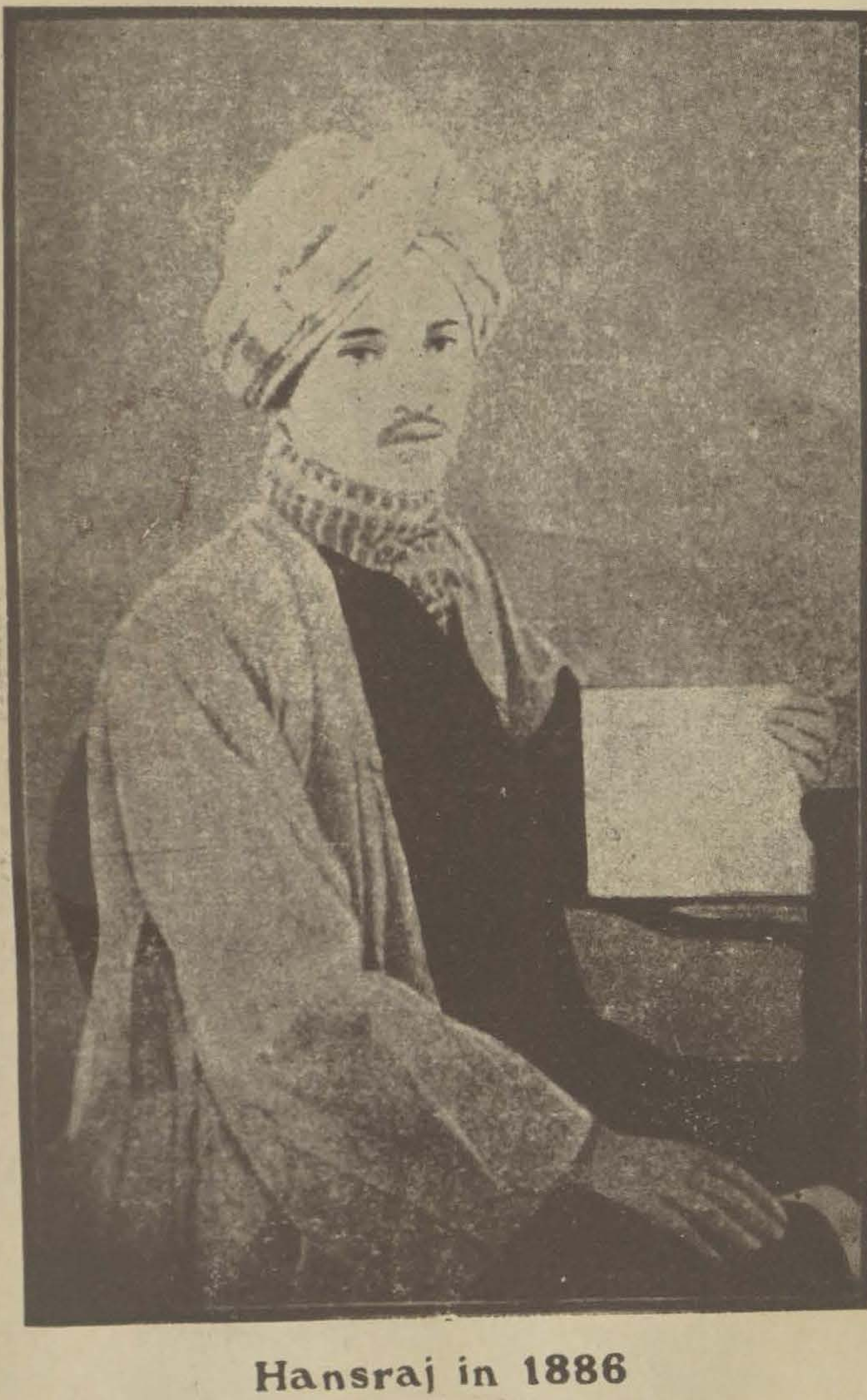
It was at this small gathering that the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College Trust and Management Society was born. Lahore was represented by Lala Lal Chand M.A. (who was to become the first President of the Society), Lala Sain Das, the President of the local Arya Samaj, and Lala Jiwan Das; Rohtak sent Lala Lajpat Rai. The constitution formulated by Lala Lal Chand was considered, modified in some minor details, and finally adopted. The first meeting of the Managing Committee elected under the constitution was held on February 27, 1886. The constitution had vested the control of the institution in this body, which was to consist of the representatives of all the Arya Samajes that had collected money for the institution, with power to co-opt a small number of outsiders representing Learning, Education and Engineering. The meeting was attended by sixteen representatives from eleven Arya Samajes, Lahore, Multan, Ferozepur City, Ferozepur Cantonment, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Amritsar, Rohtak, Jhelum and Gujrat. Several of those present were to play a very prominent part in the public life of the country later on. At their head stood Lala Lal Chand M.A., who was to steer the ship of the Dayanand College almost continuously till his death in 1912. Another was Lala Sain Das who in spite of his early death was to leave an indelible impression on all who came into contact with him. Pundit Guru Datt M.A., whose intellectual attainment had cast a spell on his contemporaries, represented the Peshawar Arya Samaj. Ferozepur was represented by Lala

Kanshi Ram, Pleader, and Rawalpindi by Bhagat Ishwar Das, M.A., Pleader. The Managing Committee added Lala Ganga Ram, C. E., Executive Engineer—who later, as Sir Ganga Ram, became the most generous benefactor of the Punjab so far as money was concerned—and Lala Mulraj, M. A., P. R. S., the first President of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, to represent Engineering and Learning respectively.

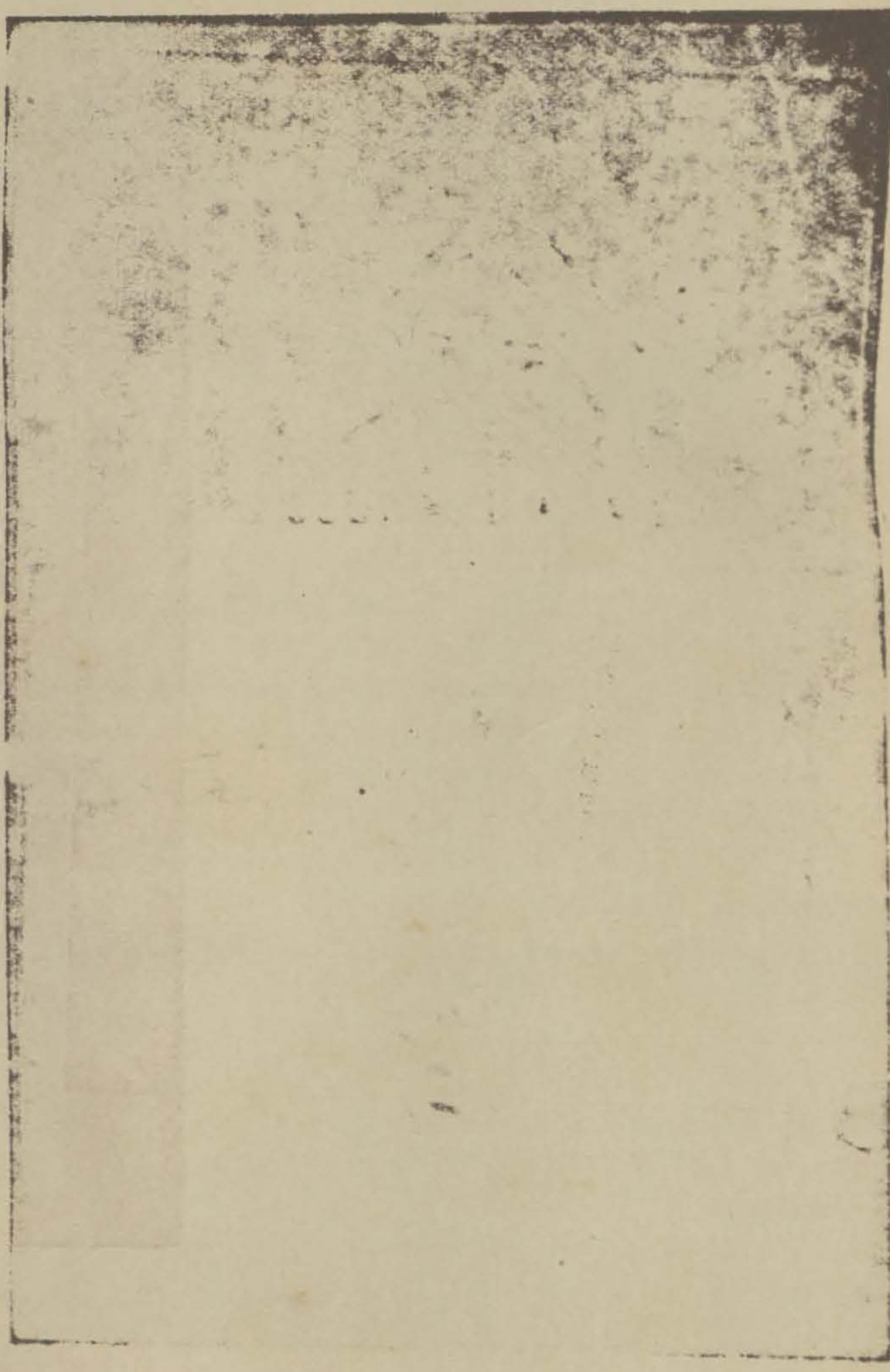
Office bearers were elected on March 20, 1886. Lala Lal Chand, M.A., was elected the first President and Lala Madan Singh, the first Secretary.

This still left unsettled the question of the location of the memorial. It was, however, decided on March 20, 1886 to open a D.A.-V. High School at Lahore, pending the final selection of the site of the proposed memorial. Even with the honorary services of the Headmaster, the institution still needed more money than was available from the interest on the collections which now amounted to Rs. 24,868. The members of the Executive Committee of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, therefore, decided on February 13, 1886 to raise monthly subscriptions, till the college funds should grow large enough to provide an interest of Rs. 400 a month—just sufficient to cover the estimated expenses of the High School.

Everything was now ready for the foundation of the school. On May 8, 1886, advertisements for the staff were published, and on May 29, the Lahore *Tribune* declared "It has been finally announced that the Arya Samaj people will open the Anglo-Vedic School on Tuesday, the first proximo". On May 31, 1886, a public meeting was held in the Arya Samaj Mandir, Lahore, to explain the aims and objects of the Dayanand High School which was to be started the next day. Pundit Guru Datt, M.A., was the principal speaker. On June 1, 1886—a day henceforward sacred in the



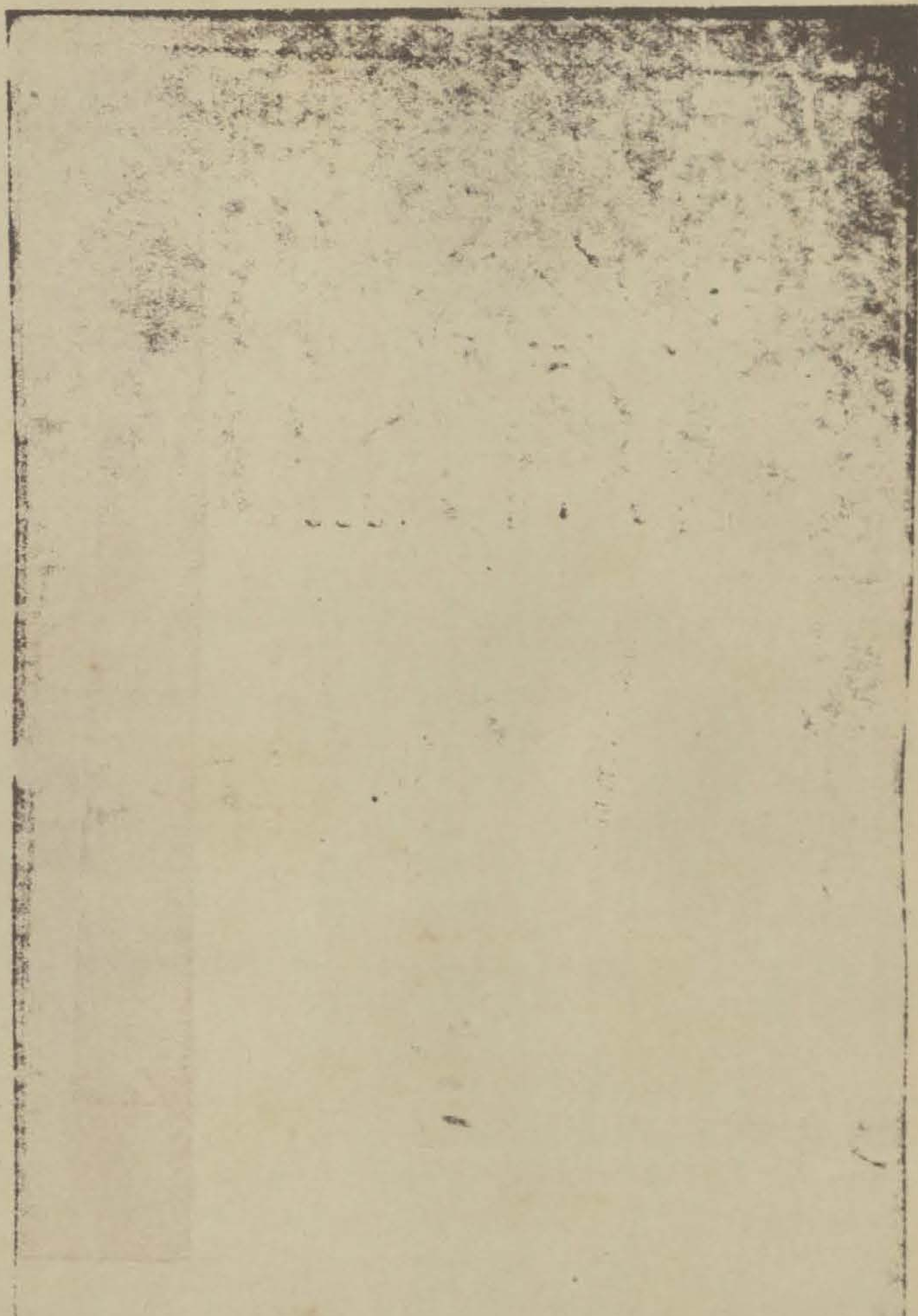
Hansraj in 1886



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It was an onerous task that Lala Hansraj had taken on his young shoulders--so onerous indeed, that the European Headmaster of the Government High School, Lahore, publicly sneered at that 'beardless young man' who till recently was his student assuming charge of a High School. It is in fact not possible for us to-day to realize the full weight of the burden that Lala Hansraj assumed on June 1, 1886. When he had once blazed the trail, many came and travelled successfully along the way he had shown. We have now become accustomed to the sight, not only of Indian Headmasters of schools and Principals of colleges but Indian Premiers of provinces as well. Among his students many in their later years filled offices that in 1886 would have been considered out of the reach of any Punjabee. A Ministership, a Judgeship of the High Court, a Speakership of the Assembly, a Vice-Chancellorship of a University, all these have been claimed as their own by his students in subsequent years. An interesting light is thrown on the conditions in 1886 by the participation of Lala Hansraj in a meeting held on March 6, 1886 under the auspices of the Indian Association to memorialize the Government for the appointment of an Indian as a judge of the Chief Court, Lahore. But in 1886, even Indian Headmasters were few and far between. The Anglo-Oriental Muslim School at Aligarh had a European Headmaster, even though the avowed intention of the institution was to reconcile the Muslims to the study of English and western sciences. In the New High School, Poona, though Indians had assumed responsibilities of the same kind, it had been considered necessary to supplement Indian talent by



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drawing upon European learning and experience in the managing body. It can, therefore, be truly said that Lala Hansraj was the first Indian to assume the Headmastership of a High School under purely Indian management.

Running a High School was a difficult enough matter in itself in those days. But Lala Hansraj was to run a School which had been founded in memory of Swami Dayanand with the avowed purpose of loosening the iron hold that the West was gaining on those who received English education in India. He was to try the new experiment of imparting Western education to his students and at the same time not only teaching them to be Indians, first and last, and all the time, but instilling in them a love for their ancient past with its hoary traditions of Aryan Culture.

With a grim resolve he decided to shoulder the burden. He had to fight the prejudice of the parents against a novel experiment, the lack of official recognition, and the determined opposition of the orthodox. By relaxing the standard of discipline it would have been easy to attract profitably in the beginning, though ultimately at a greater cost, a large number of students who were finding a life of discipline elsewhere rather irksome. But Lala Hansraj was an iron disciplinarian from the very beginning. The school soon overcame all these initial disadvantages. The *Tribune* in its issue for June 5, 1886 declared :—

" It is o be noted with extreme pleasure that the reception given by the public to the school is unparalleled and unique. About 300 students are already on its rolls, although the institution is an infant of five days only.

" We have every confidence in the Head Master who has, spurning personal comfort and gain, offered his valuable services *gratis* to the school."

The School fully justified the hopes of those who had sought its portals. As the first report of the Dayanand College Society says :—

" Under the guidance of a Head Master devoted to its prosperity, the school has been making steady progress, and within eleven months, has now won a measure of reputation which has outshone some of the older institutions. The number of boys at present receiving instruction in the School is 505.

" The School sent up twenty six students for the Middle School Examination, of whom fourteen passed. It sent up four candidates for the Matriculation of the Calcutta University who have all passed."

Lala Hansraj himself set an example of hard work by coaching students in the evening after school hours. No wonder that the school forged ahead and became the biggest and in some respects the best conducted school in the province. The *Report on the Administration of the Punjab* for 1887-88 said, " The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School, which receives no grant-in-aid deserves special mention as it has supplied nineteen successful candidates for the Entrance Examination, or more than any other school in the Province. The proportion of successful candidates also, which was 41 %, was higher than in most other institutions. It is very well conducted......It has a large attendance."

The way in which the school came to be placed on ' the list of recognized schools ' throws an interesting sidelight on the educational policy of the time. Some of the students had done so well in the Anglo-Vernacular Middle School Examination that they won scholarships. One fine morning, Lala Hansraj received a letter from the Director of Public Instruction giving him the welcome news,

but adding that the scholarships were tenable only in a recognized school. He added that this simply implied that the school should be open to inspection by the officials of the Education Department. Lala Hansraj wrote back asking for some further information on the subject. At last an assurance was given that, *like any one else*, the officials of the Education Department could come and see the School. This letter was treated as an application for recognition, and the same evening the School obtained 'recognition.'

Another very interesting feature of the school organization was the appointment of Lala Ganga Ram, C. E., Executive Engineer, Lahore, and Pundit Guru Datt, M.A., as Inspectors. They were requested to visit the school every fortnight and thus help the Headmaster in his work. An equally important association of laymen with professional teachers was the appointment of certain outsiders as examiners, some of them educationists working elsewhere, others men of light and learning, but unconnected with the teaching profession.

From the very beginning emphasis was laid on the students leading a well-disciplined and well-regulated life. With this end in view a Boarding House was established, even though the number of boarders was only ten. Here it was intended to mould the whole life of the students outside the class rooms. Regularity was to be promoted, harmonious development of all faculties, mental, physical and spiritual, was to be encouraged. Students were taught to live a happy corporate life. The school authorities not only provided board and lodging as they do in most school boarding houses even to-day, but made arrangements for laundering, shaving and medical assistance. Lala Hansraj was the ex-officio Secretary of the School Boarding House Sub-Committee and closely guided and supervised the work of the Superintendent.

The success of the school encouraged the Arya Samajists to propose opening the Intermediate classes. This suggestion produced a sharp conflict of opinion in the Managing Committee. Lala Sain Das, Pundit Guru Datt, and Lala Lajpat Rai were among those who favoured the advance, whereas the President,Lala Lal Chand and several of his colleagues thought the step premature. One of the members in opposition happened to leave the meeting before votes were taken. This resulted in giving a majority of one to those in favour of the advance. It speaks volumes for the spirit of teamwork which has been so characteristic of the Dayanand College throughout its history, that the President gracefully accepted this accidental victory of the other side, and arrangements for starting the College classes were made forthwith.

The question of choosing a Principal had now to be faced. Lala Hansraj had undertaken to serve the institution as an Honorary Headmaster. Lest there should be any feeling in the Managing Committee that he ought to be offered the post simply on account of his honorary services, his elder brother Lala Mulkraj saw Lala Sain Das and suggested that Pundit Guru Datt, M.A., might be appointed Principal. Pundit Guru Datt was then officiating as Professor of Physical Science in the Government College. Lala Sain Das, however, refused to entertain the proposal. In the Managing Committee Pundit Guru Datt's name was, therefore, mentioned as a possible candidate but it failed to commend itself to the Committee because to the elders of the Arya Samaj, Pundit Guru Datt's life, among other things, appeared to exhibit 'a complete lack of regularity' if not eccentricity. Lala Hansraj was raised to the position of the Principal of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College.

It seems that some sort of irregular college classes were started in 1888. We find Pundit Guru

Datt lecturing to the First Year students in Physical Science, while the Committee sanctioned the appointment of a Sanskrit teacher for the college classes on August 25, 1888. Formal admissions to the First Year Class seem to have been made in 1889. The University granted affiliation to the College by a resolution of its Syndicate on May 18, 1889 after these admissions had taken place. This delay resulted in some of the ablest students leaving the college after their Matriculation, as those who had won scholarships on their Matriculation results could not enjoy them in the Dayanand College so long as it was unrecognized.

Another tribute to the excellence of the work of Lala Hansraj is to be found in the steady increase of funds. When the school was opened, the total amount of capital fund stood at Rs. 25,000 only. But the success of the school enabled the Committee to appeal to public generosity much more successfully than hitherto. By January 1, 1889 the capital fund stood at Rs. 1,05,406 a sure sign of public confidence both in Lala Hansraj and the Dayanand College Committee.

The arduous duties that Lala Hansraj had to discharge together with the life of hardship that he was leading brought about a serious illness in 1889. When he agreed to serve the institution without a salary his only means of support was the sum of Rs. 40 which his elder brother had undertaken to pay to him every month. It is not suprising, therefore, that the strain of his work told upon his frail body and his health began to break down. Symptoms of tuberculosis were suspected. In a fit of despondency he approached Lala Sain Das one day and asked to be released from his obligation to serve the College so that he might die in peace. Lala Sain Das, however, refused to listen to any such suggestion. The result was that, though ill, Lala Hansraj went on attending the College as

usual. His elder brother suggested his applying for leave so that he might send him to a hill station to recover his health. This Lala Hansraj refused to do. Luckily, the college vacation intervened. He was placed under the treatment of Pundit Narain Dass, an eminent Ayurvedic physician of Lahore, with the result that he soon recovered. It is an interesting commentary on the two systems of medicines that whereas Lala Hansraj had been spending about twenty rupees a month on allopathic medicines at this time, when he changed over to the Ayurvedic system, he spent Rs. 5 only including a consulting fee of one rupee. It was this new lease of life granted to him by an Ayurvedic physician that probably gave Lala Hansraj his deep interest in Ayurvedic studies.

It was about this time in 1889, that he was elected to the Managing Committee by the Lahore Arya Samaj as its fourth representative. The association thus started continued for half a century till his death in 1938.

The experiment of starting the college classes was so successful that the Degree classes were also added in 1894. This was followed by the addition of the M.A. classes in Sanskrit in 1895. On both occasions, the Committee had been encouraged by the brilliant results which the hard work of the Principal and his staff had made possible. In the Intermediate Examination of 1891, the College was responsible for the success of a larger number of students than any other College. In 1895 one of its students stood first in the province in the Degree Examination, the first position in History, Philosophy and Applied Mathematics was also secured by three students of the college.

Meanwhile the total number of students in the school and the college had been steadily rising. In 1890 there were 768 students on the rolls, out of

whom 38 were in the college department; in 1895 there were 303 in the college alone. The administration of such a large institution was not an easy task. But though administrative work might consume a large amount of his time, Lala Hansraj did not neglect his duties as a teacher; he lectured on English, History and Political Economy and gained a great reputation as a brilliant exponent of these subjects.

CHAPTER V

Split in the Arya Samaj

When the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School was opened on June 1, 1886, it was intended to be the token of a whole community's gratefulness to Swami Dayanand's memory. Appeal for funds had been made throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was realised, however, almost at once that the Punjab would have to shoulder the honour of raising the proposed memorial. Lala Hansraj's sacrifice clinched matters, and the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School was founded on June 1, 1886, at Lahore with the prayers of the entire Arya Samajist community not only in the Punjab but in certain neighbouring provinces as well. Its success raised the hopes of the Arya Samajists and, as we have seen in the last chapter, it was soon raised to the collegiate standard.

By the beginning of the year 1889, however, differences of opinion began to emerge. The first rift in the lute came in April, 1889 when the College Society refused to consider a proposal sponsored by Pundit Guru Datt to find Rs. 5,000 for a Sanskrit Library. The Society was evidently influenced by the fact that it had already assumed, with the active approval and support of Pundit Guru Datt, whom we further find supporting the teaching of Persian in the College, the heavy burden of adding the college classes to the school, and that neither the college, nor the school, nor the two boarding houses had as yet buildings of their own. A Sanskrit Library, they felt, though a laudable object, could wait. They found it difficult to raise money for it just when the College, the pet child of the Arya Samajists, was yet in its infancy.

Pundit Guru Datt, however, resented this decision of the College Society. Though a Professor of Physical Science in the Government College, Lahore, he was veering round to the view that the study of Sanskrit grammar particularly of the *Ashtadhyayi* was a complete education in itself. He now suggested that it be introduced as a regular subject of study in the school and college classes. The question was referred to a sub-committee of which Pundit Guru Datt, was the convener. He failed in converting it to his view. Lala Hansraj who was a member of the sub-committee suggested that "extracts from the *Ashtadhyayi* be made up to the standard of the *Laghu Kaumudi*, and that text books be prepared with the *sutras* plus their meaning and explanation in Hindi culled from Swami Dayanand Saraswati's *Vedanga Prakash* and these text books be introduced in the five Middle and Upper classes." He further suggested that extracts from "the *Manu Smriti*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata* be culled and introduced besides the course in the Middle and Upper classes." But this did not satisfy Pundit Guru Datt. The Committee adopted Lala Hansraj's suggestion and a partial study of the *Ashtadhyayi* was thus introduced in the school.

This was obviously a small matter, the method of teaching Sanskrit grammar on which experts could easily disagree. But Pundit Guru Datt was at this time surrounded by a group of admirers. The distance that separated him intellectually from them was very great. They almost made a fetish of him. As he could be easily humoured, he did not protest against his views—very often a bad caricature of his views—being carried to extremes, which in cooler moments, he would probably have regretted. These young and old zealots formed into an *Ashtadhyayi* class under Pundit Guru Datt, fanned the controversy by giving undue importance to Pundit Guru Datt's

extreme views in educational matters and succeeded in widening the gulf between Pundit Guru Datt and his erstwhile leader, Lala Sain Das, as well as his friend, Lala Hansraj. Thus the relations between Lala Hansraj and Pundit Guru Datt inevitably became strained. Pundit Guru Datt's friends began to question the lead of Lala Sain Das and Lala Hansraj in educational matters and from this they were easily led on to question the soundness of their conduct in general.

It was at this point that the controversy about vegetarianism arose. In 1889 exception was taken to the fact that Lala Sain Das, who had been President of the Lahore Arya Samaj for the last decade and had been elected its first Secretary during the stay of Swami Dayanand at Lahore in 1877, was a non-vegetarian. He had been so all these years; but the full enormity of his offence, it seems, was only realized when the controversy about the method of teaching Sanskrit in the Dayanand College had taken a bitter turn. If those in authority would not yield to logic—so their opponents argued—why should not an attempt be made to dislodge them from their position of authority by disqualifying them from holding any office of trust on account of their reprehensible conduct? Naturally, Lala Sain Das and those who had been present with him at the birth of the Arya Samaj at Lahore in 1877 could not understand why the conduct which had gone uncensured by Swami Dayanand himself in 1877, should make them a target of attack at the hands of his followers, some of whom had been admitted into the Arya Samaj by the very persons whose conduct they were so questioning. Before long further issues were joined. Those who questioned the propriety of taking meat quoted the *views* of Swami Dayanand on the subject as expounded in the *Satyartha Prakasha*. Lala Sain Das yielded to none in his respect for the great *Rishi*; but he claimed that more importance should be

attached to what he had actually permitted in practice. Further attempts at clarifying the issues led only to both sides being landed in a morass of theological quarrels.

The question of diet had the advantage of becoming a good rallying cry and an effective slogan. The question of the method of teaching Sanskrit Grammar —whether by means of modern rules, illustrated by modern instances, or by means of the *Ashtadhyayi* —was too remote from the actual life of the people to form the ground for a serious struggle. It could only be a question for acrimonious discussion in Committee meetings. But vegetarianism versus non-vegetarianism promised to make a vital issue that could rouse passions and carry the struggle out of the academic field into a sphere of more grimrealities.

On July 30, 1889, a resolution was moved in the Executive Committee of the Lahore Arya Samaj to declare that no one could become an *Arya Sabhasad*, if he took meat or liquor unless ordered by a physician. Lala Hansraj moved an amendment to the effect that the proposal was in the nature of an addition to the *Ten Principles* of the Arya Samaj and so could not be considered. This amendment was adopted by eight votes to five. Among those who supported Lala Hansraj's amendment was Rai Paira Ram, who was soon to become the leader of what later came to be known as the vegetarian party.

It may be helpful to elucidate the full significance of the resolution and the amendment. When a man joins the Arya Samaj he becomes a member of the Church. The affairs of the Arya Samaj, like those of the Presbyterian Church, are managed by administrative bodies elected by all effective members. The conditions under which members can acquire the right to vote at these elections and otherwise take part in the administration of its affairs, were laid down by Swami Dayanand in a

set of by-laws framed at Lahore in 1877. A member on being qualified to vote becomes an *Arya Sabhasad.* When a man is admitted to the Arya Samaj, he undertakes to pay a monthly subscription. The by-laws lay down that if a member has paid his subscription for the last eleven months, he becomes an *Arya Sabhasad.* The oppositionists were prepared to admit non-vegetarians to the Arya Samaj, but wished to exclude them from the ranks of the *Sabhasads.* Thus a non-vegetarian, though he could be an Arya Samajist, was considered not good enough to exercise a vote at elections or to have a hand in the administration of Arya Samajic affairs. The amendment moved by Lala Hansraj meant that, once a man was accepted as a member of the Arya Samaj on the basis of his having subscribed to the *Ten Principles,* he acquired in due course all the rights of the membership of the organization.

While these controversies were raging, the cruel hand of death removed two of the most prominent workers of the Arya Samaj. Lala Sain Das and Pundit Guru Datt both passed away in 1890, within three months of each other. In spite of the bitter quarrels that had been taking place, Lala Hansıaj's personality appealed to the imagination of the Arya Samajists as a body, and the mantle that had been gracing Lala Sain Das for a number of years now fell upon his shoulders. He became the President of the Lahore Arya Samaj in 1890 and of the Provincial Representative Assembly in 1891.

Meanwhile the controversy went on. In 1890 another attempt was made to press further proposals in the annual meeting of the College Society. Among other things it was proposed to lay down that :—

" It is most desirable that the classes for teach-

ing *Arsh Granthas* and the *Vedas* be opened in connection with the D. A.-V. College."

In order to further this scheme it was suggested that arrangements be made for a course of studies spread over 22 years, embracing such varied subjects as Ayurveda, Dhanurveda (Archery), Astronomy, Arthaveda (Economics), and Gandharva Veda (Fine Arts).

This scheme of studies was defeated by a majority of 31 to 4, even some of the signatories to the letter voting against it. It was, however, decided that, "The Society desires that the *Satyartha Prakasha* and *Rigvedadi-Bhashya Bhumika* (Hindi portion only) of Swami Dayanand be introduced, in portion or in portions as the circumstances may suggest to the Managing Committee, in the curriculum of study in the Primary and the Middle Departments of the Institution and the Sanskrit portion of the *Rigvedadi-Bhashya Bhumika* be introduced in the curriculum of study in the Upper and the College Departments of the Institution in portion or in portions as the circumstances may suggest to the Managing Committee."

Thus two of the works of Swami Dayanand found their way into the curriculum of studies. At that time the college was naturally not in a position to embark upon a new scheme of studies which would extend over as many as twenty-two years preceded perhaps by an earlier preliminary study of several years. Not only that, but to teach archery, astronomy, music and medicine was a very tall order out of all proportion to the resources of the Arya Samaj at that time.

In 1891, 'the Sanskritists' again brought forward proposals for the establishment of a Vedic Department. To this department, students were to be admitted who had passed the Entrance examination or studied upto that standard. The department was to be divided into two sections,

the Lower and the Upper. The Lower department was to extend over a period of seven years and six months. The scheme for the upper sections was to be formulated later on. There was close voting on the amended proposal which was, however, defeated by 32 votes to 24 in the annual meeting of the College Society.

Again it has to be remembered that this was in 1891, when even the Intermediate classes of the College were barely two years old. To embark upon the experiment of adding a department of classical studies, with a course covering nearly eight years would have been nothing but foolhardy. Considering the resources of the Arya Samajists at the time, as well as the number and the type of the students likely to benefit by these studies, it could never have been a success.

The question of diet again came to the forefront in 1892. Rai Bahadur Lala Mulraj declared in his lecture on the Anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj, that he considered non-vegetarian diet permissible. Naturally this again brought into prominence the question of vegetarianism. But in a representative meeting of the Arya Samajists held on March 12, 1893, under the presidency of Lala Munshi Ram (afterwards Swami Shraddha Nand), President of the Provincial Assembly of the Arya Samajes, it was again decided by a majority vote that no one could be turned out of the Arya Samaj on account of his non-vegetarianism. This did not, however, put an end to the quarrel. On August 15, 1893 another resolution was moved in the Executive Committee of the Lahore Arya Samaj, seeking to expel Rai Bahadur Lala Mulraj for his views. Again the attempt was defeated, the Committee refusing to revise the opinion it had expressed in 1889 at Lala Hansraj's initiative.

It was at this time that Lala Hansraj displayed his spirit of renunciation in a way that very few

men in his position would have thought of doing. It was represented to him that his being the President of the Arya Samaj was now a cause of grave offence to his opponents on account of his non-vegetarianism. One of his friends, Mehta Radha Krishan, the future historian of the Arya Samaj, advised him to resign the presidency. He at once accepted the suggestion. Lala Lajpat Rai had some time before moved to Lahore from Hissar. His name was proposed for the vacancy thus caused. Lala Lajpat Rai was at that time the most eloquent speaker the Arya Samaj possessed. He was the Secretary of the Dayanand College Committee and was otherwise eminently fit to be Lala Hansraj's successor. He was also then a strict vegetarian. But his election was contested, Lala Durga Prashad, Headmaster of the Dayanand Middle School, Lahore, being put against him. The spirit of partizanship was abroad and Lala Durga Prashad succeeded in defeating Lala Lajpat Rai.

The controversy on diet now raged furiously. Swami Dayanand's own attitude on the practical question was known to everybody. He had appointed, or acquiesced in the appointment of Rai Mulraj and Lala Sain Das as President and Secretary, respectively, of the Lahore Arya Samaj. He had appointed Rai Mulraj Vice-President of the *Propkarni Sabha*, to which he had entrusted the task of carrying on his work. The President of the *Propkarni Sabha* and many of its prominent members were non-vegetarians. The oppositionists laid emphasis on Swami Dayanand's views on meat diet as expressed in the *Satyartha Prakasha*, and insisted that his views on all questions of doctrine were absolutely flawless. This gave rise to a new controversy. Was not Swami Dayanand infallible ? "Swami Dayanand," said the vegetarian group, "was a *rishi*, and a *rishi* sees the truth and the whole truth. He was, therefore, infallible ". The College group did not accept the view that Swami



Lala Lajpat Rai

Dayanand, or any man, could be infallible. Swami Dayanand himself had made no such claim, and would have regarded it as preposterous, had it been made on his behalf in his life time.

This was how matters stood at the beginning of 1893.

Issues were now joined in another field. In 1893, the Managing Committee proposed some amendments to the constitution and rules of procedure of the Dayanand College Managing Committee. After several of these proposals had been considered, Raizada Bhagat Ram, Bar-at-Law of Jullundur suggested that the meeting be adjourned till next year. The President refused his consent. Thereupon Raizada Bhagat Ram asserted that the proceedings were not being carried on in an 'upright manner.' This was followed by cries of 'shame.' Lala Munshi Ram then staged a demonstration and some of the members walked out of the meeting. There were now left seventy-two members present out of the ninety-four with whom the meeting had begun and they carried on the proceedings.

It was towards the end of the year 1893 that the final split came. As we have already seen, the Lahore Arya Samaj was now divided into two camps. It became difficult for the members belonging to different parties to work harmoniously on the College Committee and in the Arya Samaj. The Executive Committee of the Arya Samaj was evenly divided between the two parties. The 'cultured Arya Samajists'—as those who were then managing the Dayanand College were called—were successful in electing an extra member from among themselves. The President held the election irregular and refused to allow this additional 'cultured' member to take his seat on the Executive Committee. On this those who stood by the College decided in September 1893, to withdraw from the Arya Samaj which used to meet every week inside

the city in Wachhowali, hold their own separate meetings elsewhere, and start another Arya Samaj of their own. This was in September, 1893 ; Lala Lajpat Rai was elected the President of this Arya Samaj, which began to hold its sessions in a part of the house in Anarkali then occupied by Lala Ishar Das M.A., Advocate, who, in 1890 had succeeded Lala Sain Das as President of the Provincial Representative Assembly. The Anniversary of the Arya Samaj at Lahore has always been held in the last week of November. The members of the Anarkali Samaj had now to decide whether they could venture to celebrate the Anniversary within two months of their separation. They took their courage in both hands and held their own celebration. Thus two Anniversaries of the Lahore Arya Samaj were celebrated at the same time in November, 1893.

Both the Arya Samajes claimed to be the heirs of the Lahore Arya Samaj as founded in 1877. If the Wachhowali Arya Samaj was in physical possession of the temple of the Arya Samaj, the members of the Arya Samaj, Anarkali, could claim that in temperament they were much nearer to the Arya Samaj founded at Lahore in 1877, of which Rai Bahadur Mulraj was the President and Lala Sain Das the Secretary. They counted among them several of those who had become members of the original Arya Samaj founded at Lahore in 1877.

This raised an interesting question. Which of the two Arya Samajes at Lahore was the Arya Samaj entitled to representation on the Managing Committee of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore ?

In a meeting of the Managing Committee held on February 24, 1894, Lala Munshi Ram of Jullundur proposed and Lala Ram Krishan of Jullundur seconded that the discussion of the question be postponed till the next meeting. By a

majority of 17 to 6, however, it was decided to discuss the question forthwith. Lala Munshi Ram then proposed that the members of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, be not allowed to take part in the discussion of this question, The objection was overruled by a majority of 18 to 6. Rai Bahadur Lala Mulraj, thereupon moved that the Anarkali Arya Samaj be recognized as the body entitled to send representatives to the Managing Committee. Some members now left the meeting in order to break the quorum. The President, therefore, adjourned the meeting till 7 p.m.

At 7 p.m. twenty-two members attended the meeting including one of those who had left it earlier (Rai Labdha Ram). A resolution was then carried declaring that the Arya Samaj, Anarkali, Lahore, was the true successor of the Lahore Arya Samaj that had done so much in the past to make the Dayanand College successful. This meant that members of its Executive Committee could alone sit in the Society.

The members of the opposition now questioned the validity of the meeting held after adjournment at 7 p.m. on February 24, 1894, but the Managing Committee on April 8, 1894, upheld its validity.

On May 26, 1894, it was decided unanimously to exclude strangers from the meeting of the Society. The members present included such leaders of the opposition as Lala Ralla Ram, Lala Tola Ram, Dr. Parma Nand and others. It was further resolved that the Police be sent for to enforce the above resolution under the directions of Rai Ralla Ram and Rai Bahadur Lala Mulraj. The same evening in another meeting, Lala Hansraj proposed that only those be admitted to the meeting of the Society, who could produce a certificate of admission as required by Resolution 17, dated 23rd March, 1894, of the Managing Committee. Despite several attempts at obstructing business, the original pro-

posal, slightly amended, was carried by a majority of 19 to 10. This upset the plans of the opposition. They were not in favour of running the College, yet they desired a share in its management. Lala Hansraj and others of his way of thinking had left the Lahore Arya Samaj when they found that it was no longer possible for them to work in harmony with the group in power. The opposition, however, had not the wisdom to follow their example and leave the college to those who were actually supporting it. They even resorted to the use of sticks in an attempt to force entry into the meeting of the Society. They were, however, foiled in their attempt by the determined attitude of Lala Hansraj. On account of this disturbance, the President adjourned the meeting to the next evening.

When the adjourned meeting was held, it was attended by 128 members of the Society. It included representatives of the Arya Samajes of Abbottabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Delhi and Muradabad, besides various Arya Samajes of the Punjab. An attempt was now made to censure the office bearers of the Managing Committee and the Principal for the happenings of the previous evening, but this was frustrated.

This completed the breach. The Arya Samaj stood divided into two sections. It is interesting to note, however, that upto this time no resolution had ever been passed with regard to vegetarianism by any Arya Samaj. The resolution passed at the instance of Lala Hansraj in 1889, expressed the official attitude of the Arya Samajists. It was only negative in character and had refused to give the question of diet any undue importance. Further, both vegetarians and non-vegetarians were present in the Society as well as on the Managing Committee of the College in 1894. Thus it cannot be justly asserted that Lala Hansraj and his associ-

ates had to leave the Arya Samaj, Lahore, on account of any doctrinal difference. Nor is it right to assert that the Dayanand College Managing Committee had stood in the way of any changes seriously suggested in the scheme of studies in the Dayanand College. The last attempt to give an apparently new direction to the educational activities of the College was made in 1891, but the scheme then put forward by the opposition had aimed at putting a stop to the type of education that the College had so far been imparting with almost universal approval. Those who had advocated these new trends in education did not aim at supplementing the existing educational efforts of the Arya Samaj but at supplanting them. They urged a complete breach with the past, which those in office were not prepared to effect.

But the division once made, the two sections became popularly known as the 'Mahatma' and the 'Cultured', vegetarians and non-vegetarians. It was, however, a difference in general outlook that the split embodied rather than a difference of doctrinal opinion on any particular issue. There have been non-vegetarians not only as members but even as important office-bearers in the Mahatma section of the Arya Samaj.

Later on when the Gurukul at Hardwar was founded in 1902, the two 'sections' of the Arya Samaj became also known as the "College" and the "Gurukul" sections. Even this did not do justice to either side. The "Gurukul Section" has been maintaining several High Schools and two Colleges in the Punjab. The "College Section" has made several attempts to set up boarding schools and through its School of Divinity, the Research Department, and the School of Indian Medicine has done, as much as, if not more than, the "Gurukul Section" for Sanskrit culture.

Lala Hansraj became the target of attacks from

various interested quarters while these controversies were in progress. The split did not bring these attacks to an end; on the contrary it some time made them all the sharper. It was sedulously asserted by his opponents that the split was due to the fact that he took meat and would not give it up when it became a matter of bitter controversy in the Arya Samajic world. Such critics unconsciously paid a tribute to his high status in the Arya Samaj. But a virile body like the Arya Samaj was not likely to break into two 'camps' because of the personal foibles of any one of its members, however, high his position. Lala Hansraj held tenaciously to the path he had chosen in 1886. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. He ignored all the abuse that was showered on him. He never entered into a personal controversy with any one of his opponents and never said one unkind word about his critics. Much mud was thrown on both the sides. But if there was one man who emerged a greater figure out of these unseemly wranglings it was Hansraj.

CHAPTER VI

PRINCIPAL OF THE DAYANAND COLLEGE

The split in the Arya Samaj heavily increased the burden on the shoulders of Lala Hansraj. Most of the Samajes had passed into the hands of what had come to be called the 'Mahatma Party.' It was necessary to organize the Arya Samajists who were of his way of thinking and who felt themselves cut off from the Arya Samajes dominated by their opponents. The years that followed were a period of hard work such as even Lala Hansraj had scarcely experienced before. We find him lecturing to his classes, carrying on administrative work as the Principal of the biggest College in the Province, and acting as the Chief Superintendent of the College Hostel. To all this was now added the immense amount of work which he had to do as President of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, the central organization of the Arya Samajists of his way of thinking in the Punjab, North Western Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan.

As Principal, he was not only the immediate head of the College section of the institution, but the administrative head of the other departments as well. Besides the Collegiate School, there was an Engineering class started in 1896, and a Tailoring class which had been started in 1896-97 as a tentative effort to provide technical education. The taking over of the Ayurvedic class from the Punjab University forms a story of its own. The University of the Punjab had been started mainly as an oriental institution and it had been maintaining Ayurvedic classes since 1880. These used to be

held at first in the Oriental College, but were transferred to the Medical College in 1888. In 1897, however, Dr. Browne, the Principal of the Medical College refused to have anything to do with an "exploded and antiquated system of science", and requested the University to make its own arrangements for housing these classes. The Dayanand College, therefore, took over the Ayurvedic classes from the University in 1899 and Lala Hansraj thus assumed the care of this neglected baby as well.

The year 1896 had also seen the establishment of a separate Vedic class where a more intensive study of Sanskrit, Classical and Modern, was pursued. In order to further this object the Committee occasionally sent competent scholars to Benares and Calcutta for higher studies in Vedic literature.

It was thus a mixed flock that Lala Hansraj looked after. Budding tailors, blossoming engineers, carpenters under training, and religious teachers in the making were all there, besides the students sitting for various University examinations in the Arts and Science Departments.

The work of Lala Hansraj was all the heavier because everything he did had to be done thoroughly. A strict disciplinarian, he never allowed his sense of discipline to be deflected by any outside considerations. Howsoever near him a boy might be otherwise, in matters of discipline he would make no concessions. His own son, Balraj, (now the General Secretary of the Dayanand College Managing Committee), was his student. A Committee of enquiry was once appointed to examine the working of the Brahmachari Ashram, where Balraj used to live. Balraj offered his name as one of the witnesses ready to give information to the Committee. Lala Hansraj made no attempt to learn what his son had to say to the Committee till he had

given his evidence and treated him in the witness box just as he had treated everyone else.

But he had ample faith in his students. He would call a student to his office, demand an explanation for some act of mischief and then hand over to him the written order fining him, with a request to deliver it himself to the College Office.

He would strain every nerve to help his students. A student of his happened to be late for his oral examination in English once. The examiner refused to examine him. Lala Hansraj thereupon wrote a personal letter to the examiner and had the student examined.

His house was open to every student who cared to see him. The students falling ill in the College Hostel were always sure to find in him not only a daily visitor but one who would try to charm away their fears. He would spare no pains to make it easy for them to bear their sufferings. The story is still told how when a student fell ill and cried for his mother, Lala Hansraj's wife came and nursed him in his illness. On another occasion, an old student of his who was reading in the Medical College fell ill; he developed tonsillitis and ran a very high temperature. An immediate operation was ordered. The student became frightened. Some of his friends who were still studying in the Dayanand College came and told the Principal. On enquiry he found that a lady belonging to one of the most respectable families in Lahore treated those suffering from tonsillitis, usually, a disease of children. But the patient could not be removed from the private lodgings he was occupying, while it seemed preposterous to expect a lady of such a respectable family to consent to come and see the patient at his own place. Lala Hansraj sent his wife who succeeded in persuading the lady to visit the patient in her company. She treated him and in a short time he was able to return to his studies.

On another occasion an old student of his who had just left the College learnt that Lala Hansraj was coming to Quetta to attend the anniversary of the local Arya Samaj. He had won a prize in the College. He wrote to Lala Hansraj, explaining why he could not be present at the prize distribution and asking the Principal to bring his prize to Quetta himself when coming to attend the anniversary there. After the letter had been posted, the student forgot all about it. When Lala Hansraj reached Quetta he began to enquire about a former student of his who had won a prize. He knew him so little in the college that, though he had brought the prize books with him, he had forgotten his name. The young man was duly discovered and received his prize at the hands of the Principal.

A great disciplinarian, he imposed the rules of discipline on himself as rigidly as on others. A Professor of Physical Science discovered his students coming late to his classes. When they were asked for an explanation they declared that the Principal who took them immediately before that class let them go a little late. The Professor marked the late-comers absent. Next day the students reported this to Lala Hansraj, who left his class as soon as the bell rang without ever mentioning the matter even casually to the Professor concerned.

On another occasion, some furniture had to be ordered for the college. At his request, the College Committee made a grant for its purchase. By mistake two extra chairs were ordered. When the bill was sent to the Committee, an objection was raised that more chairs had been purchased than were sanctioned. Rather than approach the Committee again for leave to buy the extra furniture, he paid the price out of his own pocket so that not a pie of the College money should be spent on his account.

He was very impersonal in his administrative

work. His young son, Balraj, was a student of the seventh class. When he was attending the Sanskrit class one day, his teacher was upset either at some prank or at his failure to decline a verb or a noun correctly. Up went the rod and the teacher thought that the best method for spending the time of the entire class in the Sanskrit hour was in caning the Principal's son. Mercifully, the period was only 45 minutes long. When it came to an end, Balraj reeled out and sought safety at home. When Lala Hansraj went home in the evening, Balraj and his mother recited the enormity of the teacher's offence. Lala Hansraj already knew about that particular teacher's method of punishment but as he had never taken any notice of this before, he saw no reason why he should do so merely because his son happened to be the victim. He simply asked his son to discontinue going to the School and sent him to the Brahmachari Ashram instead.

Even in those days strikes sometimes marred the cordiality of relations between the students and their teachers. The students of the college once went on strike on account of some grievances against the College Head Clerk. When Lala Hansraj came to know of it, he addressed the students, and complimented them on having exhibited a sense of dignity and still further on the spirit of cohesion that they had shown on the occasion. Of course, he promised an immediate redress of their reasonable grievances, with the result that the students immediately went back to their classes.

He lectured to the English, History, Political Economy and Religious Instruction classes. When the college was opened he taught English, probably because the college had a Professor of Mathematics capable of teaching History as well. Later on, however, other arrangements were made to teach English and he reverted to his favourite subject, History. He was particularly interested

in the history of his own country. His lectures on Seeley's *Expansion of England* were always a treat for he pressed the result of years of historical study into the task of making this subject, particularly its Indian portion, interesting.

He continued taking what were and are still called the *Veda Path* (religious instruction) classes. On his shoulders fell the task of organizing the teaching of this rather delicate subject in the School and the College. He edited a selection from the *Manu-Smriti* and the *Ramayana* for use in these classes.

When the College started building operations, he turned Chief Engineer as well. Earlier experience made him a little distrustful of experts. When the first building for the College (now occupied by a part of the Middle Department of the School) was being erected under the honorary supervision of two of the most eminent Punjabee engineers then living, it was discovered that they had overlooked the provision of a staircase.

Himself endowed with a weak constitution, he always enjoyed the sight of his students taking part in games. He was the first educationist to introduce Indian games in his School. *Kabaddi* and wrestling made their appearance in the Dayanand High School and College, at a time when no one else gave much thought to reviving Indian games. The introduction of wrestling had an interesting sequel. In 1909 when the Government began to look with suspicion upon the Arya Samajists, the provision for wrestling in the College became one of the counts against the Arya Samaj. Let the late Mr. Ramsay Macdonald—who came on a visit to India about this time—tell the story :—

"As illustrations of the bogy character of the Samaj, I may cite two things. I was told by a

British Official that in a hidden corner of the grounds of the Arya (Dayanand) College there was a place where the students were taught wrestling in view of eventualities—but that I would not be shown that. When we were walking round the grounds, accompanied by the Arya Samaj Committee, a sand-pitch, which I had not noticed to be of any importance, was pointed out to me. They laughed merrily. 'This', the Chairman said, 'is where we secretly teach our seditious students to wrestle'. It was nothing but what one sees in nearly every village, for wrestling is a very old Indian sport."

The College also became a pioneer in rowing on the river. Rowing was neither common nor popular in those days. There is a story that when the first boat for the Dayanand College was built, a party consisting of members of the staff and of the Managing Committee went to the river. Some of the young members of the staff suggested a trip on the river. This proved too much for some of the elderly members of the party. It was only when a professional boatman was given a place in the boat, that they agreed to trust themselves to the waves.

One of the most interesting institutions of those days was the parties held on the banks of the Ravi on holidays. These were very large. Members of the staff, members of the Managing Committee, Arya Samajists from the city and, occasionally a few fortunate students, would join him in the long rambles in which he delighted. There, the conversation was free and easy. Members of the staff forgot that they had the Principal among them, the office-bearers of the Managing Committee shed their important offices. All met on an equal plane and enjoyed themselves like a happy family party. Occasionally, there would be a meal on the river at the end. Here questions were raised

and answers suggested. An important change in policy in Arya Samajic or College work could sometimes be traced back to the talks during these long rambles.

Himself raised on the works of Samuel Smiles, he impressed on the students the need of self-examination and, therefore, of keeping diaries. These diaries had to be self-revealing and sometimes he would examine the diaries of his students, thus trying to influence their lives to a larger extent than was ordinarily possible.

His relations with the staff were very happy. He expected them to take their work as seriously as he took it. He never came late to College himself and naturally, he could not tolerate any member of the staff being late. The professors had to note down the time of their arrival in the College. A hard worker himself, he was a hard taskmaster.

The College to him was essentially an institution to serve the Arya Samaj and expand its sphere of work. Lala Hansraj often addressed the weekly meetings in the Arya Samaj not only when he was scheduled to speak, but sometimes when the speaker for that particular morning failed to be present and his place had to be filled.

The College had also secured the services of a certain number of religious preachers who toured the Punjab and the neighbouring provinces on propaganda work. Lala Hansraj had to draw up their programme of work, regulate their activities and smooth over many difficulties that arose on account of the arduous conditions under which they had to work.

In 1896 a Young Men's Samaj was founded in the College under his guidance. Its members undertook to lead an active Arya Samajic life, and distinguish themselves by a spirit of service and self-sacrifice. The membership was not confined to the students of the Dayanand College alone.

Quite a large number of students of local Colleges was on its rolls. For example, surprising as it may seem to-day, in 1901 there were fifty students in the Government College, Lahore, who were active members of the Young Men's Arya Samaj and who showed their sympathy by collecting, from among their own College students Rs. 1000 for the Dayanand College on the anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj. Occasionally other societies were also formed to serve the same ends. There was once an *Unnati* Samaj, whose members undertook self-improvement in a spirit of religious fervour.

He had the happy knack of drawing round him young men in whom he discovered a special aptitude for Arya Samajic work. He would sometimes let them share his long rambles on holidays. But the most successful method was to ask them to come to his house and assist him in dealing with his correspondence. Some of those who are occupying prominent positions in the Arya Samajic world at Lahore or elsewhere to-day, first came into intimate contact with him while they were performing these secretarial duties.

A contemporary thus describes his memories of Lala Hansraj at this time :—

" Strange looking he certainly was. His figure was almost as thin as a reed, and as if to compensate for the leanness was surmounted with a voluminous white turban, tied with not much care. The cheeks were shrunken and sallow and thick glasses were worn before myopic eyes.

" There was no ' side ' to the man as he moved about the College premises. Access to him was easy—at least for me. At the mature age of sixteen one boldly lifts the *chick* hanging in front of any sanctum.

" But I soon learnt that he did not suffer fools easily. One could get into the Principal's Office but could not get at the man who presided there

Through his thick glasses his myopic eyes would pierce to the soul. His words were few but pointed—telling. There was no hoodwinking him. No second attempt to do so.

"That much was plain to me, even then. I lacked the perception to appreciate, at anything like its full value, the administrative ability that this frail, myopic, almost consumptive looking man put into that undertaking; but not the capacity to be impressed with the passion for service and the devotion and zeal with which service was rendered."

Very early in its history, the Dayanand College adopted as its ideal, "Learning, piety, and patriotism." It was not an empty, nor even a distant ideal. The students of the Dayanand College easily learnt the lesson of patriotism at the feet of Lala Hansraj, Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Lal Chand and others. When the split came, it used to be thrown into the teeth of the 'cultured' Arya Samajists that they were mostly patriots, masquerading as religious leaders. Lala Hansraj's example was enough to fire even the most apathetic young man with a love for his country. Under the influence of Lala Sain Das, he had adopted the use of swadeshi clothes at a time when the word had not yet been coined or acquired its present prestige—in fact when to use swadeshi clothes was supposed to be a mark of eccentricity. From the pair of shoes on his feet to the turban adorning his head, there was not a single article, except the spectacles, manufactured outside India. Naturally, his example was catching, and throughout the length and breadth of the country we can find, even to-day, many who learnt their lesson in swadeshi at his feet and, therefore, never forgot it.

The ideal of silent service which he personified, had also its effect on his students. Even in his student days he had adopted a rather curious

attitude towards Government Service and now as Principal his main concern was with training leaders for public life and public opinion, rather than Government servants, particularly those concerned with general administration. They warmed themselves at the fire which burnt in him. If it did not glow as well in their hearts as it did in his, it was but a difference in degree.

CHAPTER VII

HANSRAJ, THE BUILDER

One of the most important questions that engaged the attention of Lala Hansraj while he was Principal was that of the College buildings. When the Dayanand High School was opened in 1886 it was housed in a rented building. Some of the classes were accommodated in the Arya Samaj Mandir in the Wachhowali. At one time it was hoped that the *Haveli* of Raja Dhyan Singh in the Hira Mandi, the property of the Kashmir State, might become available for housing the School. This, however, proved to be merely wishful thinking. As the School grew, a Primary Department was opened inside the Mori Gate, in a building now occupied by the primary branch of the Victoria Girls' High School. In 1889 was built what is now known as the Dayanand Middle School, but which was then intended to house the Intermediate and Secondary Departments ot the Institution. The First Year class enrolled in 1889 met here. As time passed, even this building proved insufficient. Efforts were then made to persuade the Government to grant the College Committee a piece of *Nazul* land for the College buildings. Protracted correspondence followed but nothing came of it. It is interesting to note in this connection that whereas the Government has granted land to several other educational institutions at Lahore free of cost, the Dayanand College Managing Committee has to thank the Government for compulsorily acquiring from it a part of what now is the Veterinary College Grounds.

If the Government was apathetic towards the question, the need for a building for the College did not become any the less urgent. It was felt necessary, however, to give precedence to the question of the College Hostel, a part of which was built in 1899 on its present site in the Court Street. The original building acquired from Messrs. Jamsetjee was used as the Science Block of the College. For the Arts classes, the 'College Barracks'—the present 'D' Block in the College Hostel—were built soon after. No one could then have foreseen the gigantic stature to which the College was soon to grow. It was decided, therefore, to erect the College buildings on the same site. The architectural plan was prepared by the late Bhai Ram Singh, then Principal of the Mayo School of Arts, Lahore. On April 23, 1905 the foundation stone was laid by that eminent Arya Samajist, His Highness Major General Maharaja Sir Partap Singh, G.C.S.I., K.C., LL.D., of Idar.

When the work on the foundations of the new College building started, the site was found to be unsuitable for the purpose and the question of erecting the College building elsewhere began to engage the attention of the Managing Committee. Lala Lal Chand suggested in July 1905 that the College be built on the Committee's land at Ichhra (now Hansraj Nagar, near the Lahore Cantonment Railway Station) some five miles from the city. This suggestion, however, was rejected by the Managing Committee on July 31, 1905, mainly on account of the opposition of Lala Hansraj and Lala Durga Das, the General Secretary of the Managing Committee. The next two years were spent by the Committee in searching for a more suitable site for the College. Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand and Lala Lajpat Rai were anxious to build the College at Ichhra. Here the Committee already possessed some 345 bighas of land, bought at a cost of Rs. 22,040 in 1898 at the sug-

gestion of Lala Hansraj's old friend and class fellow, Lala Amar Nath Khanna. Lala Lal Chand urged that the College should be built there, away from the din of the busy city of Lahore, at a place where the Committee had sufficient land of its own for all types of developments. Lala Hansraj, however, was of the opinion that if the Dayanand College was shifted to Ichhra, one inevitable consequence would be that the Arya Samajic work at Lahore would suffer. He was also afraid that there might be a considerable fall in the number of students, thus diminishing the sphere of influence of the institution. It is undeniable that if the College had *then* been shifted to Ichhra, much of its present development might have been impossible. It is true that the Dayanand College was at that time very largely a residential institution, between sixty-five to seventy-five percent of its students being boarders. But Lala Hansraj felt that if the College was moved to Ichhra some of the students from outside might not find it convenient to join it. He was thus a persistent opponent of the Ichhra proposal and was anxiously searching for another suitable site.

It throws a flood of light on the methods of work which the Dayanand College Managing Committee had developed that when Lala Lajpat Rai on August 15, 1906 tried to re-open the question of the College site, he was defeated in his attempt by the combined votes of Lala Lal Chand—whose scheme might have had a chance of being considered if the question had been allowed to be re-opened—and his most vehement opponent in this matter, Lala Durga Das, who wanted to keep to the original site. It is also of interest that Lala Hansraj remained neutral when the voting on this question took place.

Though the plans for erecting the College building in the Boarding House compound had been prepared, accepted by the Managing Committee, and sanctioned by the Lahore Municipal Committee, Lala

Hansraj was reluctant to commence building operations there in view of the adverse opinion of the engineers. He was also afraid that the site that the College possessed then might not be sufficient both for its hostel and college buildings. The Ichhra Scheme stood rejected but nothing else could be suggested in its place.

In the beginning of 1907, the Managing Committee was once again busy trying to solve this problem. But on March 3, 1907, Lala Hansraj quietly walked into one of its meetings. He apologized for being late, but the atmosphere was electrified when he unfolded the story that lay behind it. He told them how, while thinking about the question of site, an idea had suddenly struck him. Was it possible, he had asked himself, to acquire the spacious lands that lay close to the hostel and were then the property of Rai Ram Saran Das ? He had thereupon approached Lala Ram Saran Das and it seemed possible that they might succeed in buying the land at a reasonable price. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Managing Committee, happy after all in being within sight of acquiring a reasonably good site, accepted Lala Hansraj's lead.

Lala Hansraj seemed to have emerged triumphant out of a long controversy that must have been racking his nerves for two years. He ultimately bought the land at a cost of Rs. 90,000. When all efforts at reducing the price failed, he succeeded in coaxing Lala Ram Saran Das to bring down the actual purchase money by Rs. 10,000 by treating that amount as a donation from Lala Ram Saran Das. It was a pleasant fiction which saved the *amour proper* of both the parties.

Lala Hansraj had deliberately let himself into a very embarrassing position. The purchase price could only be paid out of the funded capital of the College. But this drain on the funded capital re-

sulted in reducing the income of the institution and it was necessary to replenish the capital fund. The two *Kothis* which stood on the land were turned into a hostel, where accommodation was found for one hundred boarders. The income from their hostel fees would represent an investment of Rs. 30,000 of the capital fund. But to collect Rs. 50,000, the difference between the total price paid and the estimated capitalized income from the *Kothis*, was a difficult task. It is true that from time to time donations for buildings had been collected. In most cases they had been in units of Rs. 550. This sum entitled the donor to have a marble slab put upon the building mentioning his donation. It represented only the amount of money spent upon raising the building and did not take into account the cost of the site which obviously it would have been difficult to assess. Those who had been opposed to this site—and they included Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand—tried to frighten the Committee with the financial implications of raising the College building on the new site. To silence them effectively Lala Hansraj announced that he would make collections for a College Site Fund to defray the purchase price of the site.

It was a very great responsibility which he had assumed. To raise Rs. 50,000 for such a prosaic thing as the College site, where one could not have even a slab put up to record one's donation was a difficult task particularly in those days. Lala Hansraj, however, manfully put his shoulder to the task and started making collections for the purpose.

An appeal was issued over his signature in the Lahore *Arya Gazette*, asking for subscriptions for this purpose. During the summer vacation his students collected money wherever they went. He himself visited various places, whenever he could spare time for this purpose. Thus by the end of 1907 he was able to collect about Rs. 6000.

He again spent the Summer Vacation of 1908 in making collections for the fund, visiting Gujrat, Jalalpur Jatan, Sialkot and Wazirabad. It is not surprising that by the middle of the year 1909 the collections stood at Rs. 32,000. This was a great achievement. As a Muslim correspondent wrote in the *Hindustani* of Lucknow about this time :—

" Hansraj is neither a Nawab nor a Raja. Nobody is anxious to make him a Rai Bahadur either. But the influence that he wields over the country and his community, probably stands unequalled to-day.

" A few days ago he told the grateful sons of the College that, as the money collected for the college building had been spent on the purchase of a very suitable site for the college, more money was needed for the College Site Fund. Hardly had a year elapsed when his worthy students gave donations totalling Rs. 32,000. Lala Hansraj is appealing for another sum of Rs. 18,000. Of course he will get it. This money has been contributed by no K. C. S.I.'s but has come from the pockets of the middle class.

" Is it possible to create any urge for national service in the minds of young men unless they have in the College before their eyes, living examples of such embodiments of selfless devotion to the cause of national education as a Gokhale, a Pranjpye, a Hansraj, or a Munshi Ram ?"

Lala Hansraj was able to collect the entire sum by the end of the year 1909 and replace the sum of Rs. 50,000 in the funded capital that had been spent for the purchase of the College site. Thus he effectively answered the criticism of those who had opposed the purchase of the College site and had been suggesting the move to Ichhra.

In comparison with the large amounts which the appeals for College funds have in recent years

brought in—witness the Jubilee collections amounting to more than Rs. 100,000 or the Hansraj Memorial Collections which promise to run into half a million—a sum of Rs. 50,000 collected for the College in 1909 may not seem a very great achievement. We have to remember, however, that those were the years when the Arya Samajists were suspects in the eyes of the Government. Further, the sons of the Dayanand College had not in 1907 risen to those eminent positions which some of them occupy to-day. No single contribution to this fund exceeded Rs. 500. Moreover the collection was very much the work of Lala Hansraj alone. As he records in his *Diary* regretfully, members of the management could not give him much help in this work.

Unfortunately, that prince of beggars for the College funds, Lala Lajpat Rai, had been deported in 1907, and thus his eloquence was not available in the service of the College for the major part of the period, though he did for some time accompany Lala Hansraj in his collection tour in 1909. Thus the collection of this large sum during the troublesome years 1907-1909 was a very creditable performance.

This only solved one problem, that of the site. There remained the cognate question of the College building. Early in 1909 the building of the Science Block was taken in hand, partly because a University grant for its equipment became available at this time. The building plans were prepared by Rai Bahadur Ganga Ram. Rai Fateh Chand and Rai Bahadur Surjan Das, two eminent Arya Samajist engineers, supervised the construction of the building. Lala Hansraj, however, had an anxious time throughout the period when the buildings were under construction. The inner fittings of the laboratories had to be decided upon and the equipment of the lecture theatres

and practical rooms designed, besides many minor points of detail cropping up from time to time for immediate decision. It has to be remembered that this was the first Science Block of considerable size being built in the Punjab. The progress of the work was some time exasperatingly slow. Lala Hansraj's *Diary* for the year 1909 records an entire morning spent on the question of the location of the *pankhas* in one of the laboratories, in prolonged discussions between the Principal, the Professor of Biology and the Engineer-in-Charge. When the block was complete it was an imposing sight and made provision for the teaching of Science on a scale hitherto considered impossible in the Punjab.

But one thing led to another. As soon as the Science Block was ready for occupation, the problem of building the Arts Block arose. The Arts classes had been held in the College Barracks since 1897. But the number of students in the classes was fast outgrowing the available accommodation. Some of the students of the early twentieth century still recall those pleasant days when one half of the class sat in the room and the other half stood in the verandah. Of course, the Professors sat inside the room and not all of them could easily control the boisterousness of those who somehow always managed to find themselves crowded out into the verandah. Classes were sometimes held under the shade of the trees as well. But the new Indian Universities Act insisted on making all this a thing of the past, and the question of building the Arts Block of the College had naturally to be taken in hand.

There was the usual problem of finance. When the plans had been prepared, the estimated cost of the buildings was found to be Rs. 77,000. Where was all this money to come from ? A sum of Rs. 15,000 was available from the donations made for special rooms but that would not have made it possible to start building operations.

Help came from an unexpected quarter. Messrs. Banka Mal and Bros. of Ferozepur had in 1908 given a donation of Rs. 30,000 for the establishment of a Boarding School of the English Public Schools type. The establishment of the Dayanand Brahmachari Ashram, as this School came to be called, was the result. But the School did not prove a success. It was the only venture in which Mahatma Hansraj had to retrace his steps, though in fairness to him it must be remembered that he had never been a warm supporter of this institution. The donors were now prevailed upon not only to transfer their donation to the College Buildings Fund, but to increase it to Rs. 60,000, thus bearing the entire cost of building the Rai Gopimal Block consisting of the College Hall and four adjoining class-rooms. The frontage of the block was designed by that famous Indian Architect, Bhai Ram Singh, in Hindu classical style. The building was completed early in 1911 and formed a fitting dedication to the Jubilee of the College which was celebrated in April 1911.

Meanwhile provision had already been made for a hostel for the resident students. The 'A' Block provided commodious rooms, each with accommodation for three students. The removal of the Science classes to the new Science Block resulted in the old Science Block being used as a part of the hostel. The two Kothis standing on the College lawns accommodated another hundred students. The building of the Arts Block left the College Barracks free to be converted into residential rooms. It was, however, soon felt necessary to build 'cubicles' —as rooms providing accommodation for single students have come to be called in the Punjab. The 'B' Block was, therefore, built to meet this demand. In the building of the hostel, as in that of the Science and Arts Blocks, donations had been sought for in lump sums of Rs. 550. Many a pious Hindu was thus enabled to pay tribute to the memory of his father, mother or some other member

of the family by giving a donation in that form—an expedient to which the late Lala Sain Das had been vehemently opposed as too like the orthodox ceremony of *Shraddha*. The commemorative inscriptions on these rooms read to-day like pages from a social history of Hindu India.

Thus when Lala Hansraj retired in 1912 all the building needs of the College had been provided for. The Arts and Science Blocks served the needs of the College and the Engineering classes. The accommodation in the hostel was not always sufficient to provide rooms for all the students who sought admission. The Gokal Chand Gymnasium was being used as the Biological Laboratory. In 1910, Seth Chhajju Ram had given a donation of Rs. 2,000 for a swimming tank, which was yet to be built. The generosity of the late Bakhshi Jaishi Ram had placed the Bakhshi Jaishi Ram Grounds at the disposal of the College for games and sports. Lala Hansraj had played a very prominent part in this fine achievement.

But who can provide a permanent suit for a rapidly growing child! The buildings which were sufficient for the needs of the College then have had to be considerably expanded by his successors. They knew, however, that they were building on a foundation which had been truly and firmly laid by his master hands.

CHAPTER VIII

Plain Living and High Thinking

When young Hansraj accepted the generous offer of his brother to a share of his meagre salary in 1885, little did he know that he was blazing a new trail. His elder brother Lala Mulkraj was then earning only Rs. 80 a month and he had agreed to allow his younger brother to share it equally with him. So young Hansraj, when he became Headmaster of the Dayanand High School had an allowance of Rs. 40 a month with which to maintain himself and his wife. In 1889 when he became Principal of the Dayanand College, Lahore, he still had the same allowance, and one of the most important problems he had to solve was, therefore, to live as Principal within these meagre means. How well he solved it only his contemporaries can adequately realise. It was a marvellous achievement even on the purely economic side.

As Headmaster he early schooled himself to a standard of life which should, though austerely simple, be attractive as well. His house in 1895 is thus described by a student of his :—

"Inside Mohalla Sathan, Lala Hansraj then occupied a small two-storeyed house. After crossing the *Deohri*, we entered a room ten feet wide and sixteen in length. Its two windows looked out into the street and provided air and light together with the doors on the other side. It was furnished with a simple cotton *durri*. On the floor in a corner of the room, sat Lala Hansraj, surrounded by a writing desk or two and one or two low tables. The tables were usually piled up with such papers as he preferred to deal with at home. Squatting on the *durri* with a writing desk in front of him, he sat facing his visitors. Except the tables and the

desks for papers, the room was austerely bare of any furniture. Whosoever came to him had to squat like him on the floor.

"This room opened into a smaller one which was used as a retiring room. Here a simple charpoy lay covered with a rough *khes* (bedspread). The upper storey had two small rooms and was used by his wife and mother. Over the *deorhi* there was a kitchen. The house rent did not exceed Rs. 4 a month."

Visitors who came to see him often went away wondering at the severely simple life they found him leading. Fortunately, though frail in body, he had few attacks of serious illness. But an illness would very often bring home to others, though not to himself, the difficulties of living in that house. Yet he was perfectly satisfied to remain where he was, laughingly declaring to all who remonstrated with him that he was quite contented and happy there.

He remained in this house for several years, till the Committee found itself in a position to provide him residential quarters on the premises of the institution—the Kashmir House, on the site of the present Boarding House of the Dayanand High School. Here, of course, accommodation was both ample and comfortable. He had, however, taught himself to live so simply, that a portion of his new official residence was always available for use by relatives, colleagues, and even students. At times it was occupied by as many as half a dozen families.

As we have already seen he adopted the use of swadeshi cloth very early in his life. Thus before *khaddar* had been sanctified by its use by Mahatma Gandhi, he was wearing it without making a fetish of it. A *khaddar* pyjama and a shirt of the same material was usually covered by a coat of *gabroon* (cheap gaberdine) in the summer and

patti or *kashmira* in the winter. He usually used Punjabee shoes, but a pair of Indian made boots was a much prized possession reserved for long walks. The shoes sometimes proved troublesome. His *Diary* for 1909, for example, records the fact that as he had no socks, a walk in the morning produced blisters all over his feet. He was, however, so unmindful of the usual proprieties that when the blisters made it impossible for him to use his shoes, he started going on his morning walks barefoot. Thus before Mahatma Gandhi made history by appearing in his loin cloth—the usual dress of the people of Gujarat—in the Buckingham Palace, Lala Hansraj had already carried his full Punjabee dress into the palaces of the reigning princes as well as the Government House and this in pre-war days, when conventions were much more respected than in the post-war world.

Though Principal of one of the biggest Colleges in the province, he almost always travelled third or intermediate class without making a song about it. He travelled often and sometimes covered long distances. Usually he would walk to the tonga-stand outside the Lohari Gate, Lahore, and enter a tonga or *tum-tum* bound for the railway station. If he had a bedding to carry with him, he would engage a coolie to bring it from his place to the tonga-stand. On most of his journeys his luggage generally consisted of a bedding, containing a change or two of shirts or pyjamas, a small handbag made of gunny-cloth, a *garvi* (a small metal pot for drinking water) and a few other similar necessities.

Even when he travelled third, he so little sought publicity that it would be only a chance encounter with an old student or an Arya Samajist that would reveal his identity to his fellow-travellers. Then if it was night, sleeping accommodation would be provided for him by some of them making room for him beside them. He always travelled unobstrusively.

No private secretary accompanied him, even when he took urgent official files which had to be disposed of without delay. No physician attended him when he moved from place to place as he put duty first even in indifferent health.

Of course his brother looked after his growing needs. The monthly allowance of Rs. 40 was from time to time increased until it had reached Rs. 130 when he died. Many were the visitors who came to worship at his shrine and would have gladly made presents to him. Some who did not understand him made vain efforts to persuade him to accept gifts, as a token of his community's gratefulness to a life of selfless service for more than half a century. He would smilingly tell them that he did not need the gifts they were pressing on him. Few, however, would take that hint. He would then tell them that though almost always begging for public causes, he never accepted a personal present. Some would not even then be dissuaded and would force presents on him. Such gifts were immediately passed on to the funds of the College or the Arya Samaj, and the donors would discover that,though apparently worsted in his fight against them, he had yet succeeded in preserving his principles without hurting their feelings.

There are still some alive to-day who remember the lively interest created one morning at the weekly meeting of the Lahore Arya Samaj, in a packet of tea. A visitor had pressed the gift on Lala Hansraj. He had probably gone away happy in the thought that after all he had succeeded where many others before him had failed. Yet the packet of tea found its way to the Arya Samaj and was now offered for sale. Bid followed bid, until finally the funds of the Arya Samaj became richer by a considerable sum.

He interpreted his self-denying ordinance so rigidly that sometimes it upset friends who felt

that they had a place in his affections. When he went to Rawalpindi to perform the opening ceremony of the Dayanand Medical Mission Hospital in 1927, he discovered that the weather was colder than he had anticipated. His host had, of course, made all arrangements for his comfort, including an additional blanket for the night. The next evening when he left for Lahore, his host pressed him to take the additional blanket with him on account of the cold. After a good deal of argument he did take it to the railway station. There he told his friend that he was sure he would not need it on his journey back to Lahore. He insisted, therefore, on returning it, much to the chagrin of his host.

On another occasion he refused to accept the gift of a water-pitcher for a long night's journey in summer. Once when he was staying with a friend in the mofussil, a young son of his host stealthily took away the cane stick that he usually carried with him. The young rogue soon turned it into unlawful uses with the natural result that the stick broke into pieces. When the father came to know of what had happened, he offered to replace the stick. Mahatma Hansraj, however, would not hear of it.

Sometimes this habit of his created rather intriguing situations. An admirer from the mofussil once thought he had discovered a way whereby he could defeat Lala Hansraj. He sent a present—a fine bedspread—by railway parcel and sent the railway receipt to Mahatma Hansraj. For several days his ingenuity was baffled. Should he take delivery of the article or should he not ? In the end he took delivery of the parcel, and handed it over as a gift to the public. The donor was warned that if the attempt were repeated, the parcel would be left unclaimed at the Railway Station.

But the greatest trial of his life came when his son Lala Balraj was arrested on a serious criminal



Hans Raj Library D.A.V. College Lahore.

charge in 1914. The legal proceedings were bound to take a long time in the committal stage as well as at the Sessions and the cost of defending the case was bound to be very high. But some of his friends also felt that it was desirable to go further and obtain outside legal assistance in order to fight the case in which the Crown was so much interested. This would have cost still more. The name of the late Mr. C. R. Das was suggested for the defence. They, therefore, approached Lala Lajpat Rai who offered to place a *hundi* for Rs. 12,000 in their hands for defending the case. No one, however, had the courage to approach Lala Hansraj with that generous contribution. He would allow no one to spend a single pie for what he declared was a personal cause. Many other similar offers from friends and admirers were refused. Only one exception was made. When the funds in his hands were exhausted, Lala Mulkraj accepted a loan of Rs. 10,000 from one of Mahatma Ji's admirers on the clear understanding that it was a loan and would be repaid as soon as Lala Mulkraj was in a position to do so.

It must not be supposed that Lala Hansraj never felt the pinch of the life of poverty which he was leading. The Sain Das Anglo-Sanskrit High School was established in 1896. Lala Sunder Das B.A., was serving there as Headmaster. It had to face serious opposition and in 1897 Lala Sunder Das wrote to Lala Hansraj asking him to come to Jullundur to help him. Lala Hansraj had regretfully to inform him that, much as he would have liked to visit Jullundur, he could not do so because he could not spare the railway fare to Jullundur and back.

On another occasion, when a case of distress came to his personal notice from a very respectable family at Lahore, he gave whatever help he could from his slender resources. But we find him sorrow-

fully recording in his *Diary*, "I wish I had more money so that it might have been possible for me to help—to a larger extent."

Even when a student, he had developed the habit of helping his less fortunate class-fellows and contemporaries. Though he had not much to spare from his scanty allowance, he shared it with others whenever he discovered a genuine case of distress. This continued when he became first the Honorary Headmaster and then the Honorary Principal of the Dayanand College and, indeed, till his last days. He possessed a tender heart which, as he once recorded in his *Diary*, made it very difficult for him to say 'No!' to an applicant, if he was once convinced that he deserved help.

Sometimes he would offer help even when it was not asked for, if he felt help was necessary. One evening he met an old student of his, then serving in the Post Office, looking very depressed. He asked him what was worrying him. The young man told him his pathetic tale, of course, without any intention of seeking monetary help from him. He had discovered when he closed his accounts for the day that he was—so his figures told him—short of cash. He checked and rechecked his accounts without being able to discover the shortage. He dared not stay at his place too long for fear lest his superiors should get suspicious on account of his remaining there so long. But, so he assured Lala Hansraj, detection awaited him the next morning when he would be lucky if he escaped merely with dismissal from service. Lala Hansraj heard him to the end, took him home, went inside for a moment and coming back placed in the hands of his young friend the Post Office Savings Bank Account Book of his wife with a signed order to pay. He told him to help himself to as much as he needed from that account so that there should be no shortage to report next morning. The young man

became tongue-tied with gratitude and ran happily home, glad to be able to keep his job.

On another occasion he discovered that a daily newspaper in the Punjab which he had helped in financing, was still running at a loss. It was on his advice that it had been founded and he was sure it was doing good work. When the editor left him after unfolding his tale of woe, he left Mahatma Hansraj as much plunged in gloom as if it were his own concern that was thus in difficulties. He soon succeeded in making arrangements for securing the necessary financial support on his own personal security so that the paper might be saved. This kind of thing happened not once but many times.

A young man who had just been accepted as a life-member at his suggestion, sat talking with him of the ways and means to cover the expenses of his post-graduate studies. He casually happened to mention that he would need books just then and asked him if the College could make any provision for buying them. "Well" he declared, "it does not matter, you can buy the books if you like and I will pay for them."

Nor did he allow his limited means to place any limits on his vision. He early developed the habit of using his vacation for long hiking tours. With some of his colleagues he would set out for Kashmir, Kulu, or Chamba. With mules to carry the baggage he would explore the beauties of some of the loveliest spots in northern India. There, away from all cares and anxieties for the time being, surrounded by colleagues who no longer felt that wholesome "awe" which his official presence so often inspired, they would all pass the time happily. Often they would spend the major part of the vacation in this fashion keeping themselves fit and joyfully accepting the gifts that God brought to them in the shape of wayside inns, rest houses, or dak bungalows.

His was, however, no puritanic life. He enjoyed a good meal heartily. Fortunately for those who know its secrets, old Indian tradition provides opportunities of living well within limited means. Milk, vegetables, raw, boiled, or cooked, local fresh fruits of the season, ghee, curd, or *lassi* prepared and served in the traditional Indian fashion enabled him to live well and yet within his means. In the summer afternoons he enjoyed a drink of *Sattus* (parched barley ground and served as a fresh drink with sugar). Tea he took sometimes in the winter afternoons. *Triphala* soaked in water overnight, provided a very good eye and hair wash. He made use of many old Indian formulae for getting the best out of Indian dishes. Doaba, his homeland, is famous for its pickles, preserved fruits and mango preparations, and he used many family recipes for adding variety, taste and richness to his dishes. A family recipe for pickled fish used to provide him a favourite appetizer in the days when he took meat.

Though he possessed almost unlimited powers of reserve and self-control, and appeared almost immovably passive in his official hours, among friends and even among colleagues out of office hours no one enjoyed a heartier laugh than Mahatma Hansraj. During the long walks he used to take on holidays, accompanied by members of the Management, Professors in the College, Teachers in the School, Updeshaks, and even students, humour was allowed full play. Many good stories were told sometimes at his own cost, thought was free, fancy roamed at will, questions were hilariously raised and as banteringly answered. Of light talk on those occasions there was no end. Juniors were sometimes allowed what to some of his colleagues seemed to be dangerous 'liberties'. No one, however, could presume to take official advantage of such familiarity. Very few men can be said to have

been so little swayed by personal likes or dislikes in their public capacity as Mahatma Hansraj.

He was very regular in his habits. He rose early in the morning and went towards the river for a walk. This seems to have been a favourite walk with many of the prominent Arya Samajists of that time. His *Diary* often records his meeting Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Lal Chand, Lala Dwarka Das, Lala Durga Das, Bakhshi Tek Chand there. He did not disdain to cut *datans* himself and bring them home. Then he sat down and said his prayers and regularly performed *Havan* every day. This was followed by a study of the scriptures. Now he was ready to go to College and immerse himself there in the work that awaited him. In the evening he occasionally joined Lala Lajpat Rai in a game of tennis. There were committees to attend and meetings to address in plenty. He would then join the resident boarders in their evening prayers. He could never complain that he had a moment to spare.

He loved to play chess as often as he could get a good game. Occasionally, he would also play cards when he needed relaxation after a particularly hard day.

He dressed well, spending as little on his clothes as his limited means allowed, yet always appearing decently dressed.

This austerely simple life, however, had a dignity, all its own. He could always meet the most princely of his visitors in a way which made even him recognize that here was a man whom he must acknowledge as his better. He would give every one his due but would expect the same in return. Many were the visitors who came to call on him as Principal of the Dayanand College, sometimes from far off countries. He impressed them all equally, from the Imperial Prince of Japan and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald to the humblest of the Arya Samajists

who came to the Dayanand College, as to a place of pilgrimage.

Stories are still told of the impression that he made on his visitors. Sometimes they came to scoff but stayed to pray. He had an inborn charm that placed even the humblest of his visitors at ease. He never reminded them—unless they compelled him to do so against his will—that they were face to face with a giant among men, who could truly claim to have placed his stamp on thousands of young men in the Punjab and elsewhere.

But his life was not a bed of roses. When he first offered his honorary services and started work for the College, he found it a hard task to reconcile his mother as well as his wife to the self-denying ordinance that he had then imposed on himself. It was something new, this way of "living martyrdom!" They could not easily understand his throwing away his brilliant career in that fashion and becoming his elder brother's dependent after all the hardships he had undergone for his education. For some time there was daily friction in the house, but his wife soon reconciled herself to the will of her 'lord and master,' and cheerfully undertook to make it possible for him to fulfil his vow. His mother discovered that Mulkraj and Hansraj were naturally complementary and that she had no cause for grumbling if each went his different way.

It was no joke, however, this life of his. Once when his daughter was ill, a doctor who came to examine her asked for a towel to dry his hands after washing them. But no towel was forthcoming because there was none in the house suitable for the purpose. On other occasions there would not be sufficient money for the ordinary needs of the household. His inspiring example, however, would make his children and wife put up with every kind of inconvenience. As elsewhere, in the domestic

sphere, he put others before himself and never spent an extra pie on his own personal needs.

He did not, however, allow his spirit to be warped by this. He read voraciously and regularly. He made the entire Vedic literature give up its secrets to him.

Thus he acted as a guiding star to many who came to look for such a guide in the stormy seas of their lives. His way of living left an indelible impression upon the public life of the Punjab. He set a standard for the use of public funds which others had to keep in mind even if they could not attain it and by which they knew their conduct would be judged. His students, wherever they went, carried these lessons with them, with the result that the standard of public integrity in the Punjab—thanks to Mahatma Hansraj's example — is much higher than anywhere else. It sometimes produced remarkable results even in fields not directly connected with his activities. For example, the expenses of the volunteers enrolled for the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1929 at Lahore were much less than similar expenses in the previous session at Calcutta. When the students of the Dayanand College went out to the United Provinces for famine relief work, their behaviour made a refreshing contrast with that of the workers from other organizations. First in relieving distress in areas where others would hesitate to go, they never spent a single pie on their own needs even when they discovered that the personal outfit of some of the workers from certain other organizations came out of the famine relief funds.

Another result of this was the emergence of the order of 'Life Members' working in the Dayanand College and its sister institutions.

CHAPTER IX

The Order of the Life Members

Lala Hansraj's offer of honorary services was something unique in the annals of modern India. It would in itself have constituted a landmark in the history of the Punjab and the history of education in the country at large. But it was far from remaining an isolated incident.

His magnetic personality made him a beacon light for many of his students. No wonder that as the Dayanand College grew, many of them became fired with something of his zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice. Early in the history of the College some of his old students coming from well-to-do families started serving the College honorarily. The names of Lala Jaswant Rai M. A., and the late Lala Balmokand B.A., stand pre-eminent. A little later Lala Ishwar Das Sahni M.A., served for a few weeks as an honorary professor of Physical Science. Bakhshi Tek Chand M.A., also officiated temporarily as Honorary Headmaster of the Dayanand High School, Lahore. This, however, could not be developed into an institution. Men like Tirath Ram Sahni and Churamani who are willing to sacrifice the bright career of their sons at the altar of an educational institution are far too few in this world. Even fewer are Mulkrajes, willing to share their scanty income with their brothers. But brilliant young men were some time attracted by the noble example of Lala Hansraj, and it was felt that something should be done to harness the enthusiasm and spirit of self-sacrifice and of hard work which inspired them. Thus came into being the informal order of 'Life Members'.

Proposals to create a formal order of this kind were several times made by Lala Hansraj, but he did not find much support among other leaders of the Dayanand College movement, probably because they were afraid that if they started an order and failed to secure a sufficient number of adherents, they would be making themselves a laughing stock to the world.

But Hansraj would not be thwarted. If he could not succeed in establishing a formal order, he did the next best thing. From time to time brilliant young men were appointed to the staff of the College and the School, on a subsistence allowance of Rs. 75 a month. To begin with, it seemed to have been an experiment only. No formal undertaking to serve the institution permanently on this or a higher salary for any particular period was ever given, because none was demanded. The young men thus recruited enjoyed no concessions, either in matter of leave or of free residential quarters. They were, however, generally called 'Life Members'. The first young man to offer his services in this manner was Lala (now Doctor Sir) Gokal Chand Narang who had topped the list of successful candidates in the M.A. examination in English of the Punjab University. The contemporary records of the Committee knew him only as an Assistant Professor of English on Rs. 75. What Lala Hansraj had in mind can be studied best in the note that he wrote on the subject in 1900.

"It would be desirable," he declared, "to have such men on the staff of the College as were fired with a desire to serve the cause for which the Dayanand College and the Arya Samaj stood". "They should," he suggested, "devote their whole life to the institution, on a subsistence allowance of Rs. 75 per mensem only." "Their presence," he was sure, "would create a stable element in the staff of the College, lessen the financial problem of

the institution and impart a highly desirable permanency"—then very often absent—"to the staff of the College." "Above all," he held, "such selfless workers would succeed by their example in creating in the College a distinctive atmosphere of self-sacrifice, simple living and high thinking".

Lala Gokal Chand was soon followed by Lala Sain Das M.A., who joined as Professor of Physical Science on January 7, 1902. Lala Diwan Chand M.A. (later Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agra) joined the institution as Headmaster of the Dayanand High School, Lahore in March 1902. 'Lala' Parma Nand M.A. (now Bhai Parma Nand M.L.A., [Central] for several years President of the Hindu Maha Sabha) joined as an Assistant Professor of History in December, 1902.

Outside Lahore, towards the end of 1902, Pundit Mehar Chand B.A. (now Honorary Principal of the Jullundur Dayanand College) became the Honorary Headmaster of the Sain Das Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Jullundur which was then struggling for existence in rather trying circumstances. Lala Devi Chand M.A., refused the offer of a job in the Provincial Civil Service to become the Headmaster, first of the Anglo-Sanskrit High School (now the Dayanand College) at Rawalpindi, and then of the Anglo-Sanskrit High School (now the Dayanand College) at Hoshiarpur.

Other members joined a little later. Lala Ram Chand M.A., became Headmaster of the Dayanand High School, Lahore in 1904. Unhappily, he died in 1905. A little before his death he wrote a pathetic letter to Lala Diwan Chand, in which he expressed the hope that he would be permitted to continue serving the institution in the next incarnation! By his death the College lost a very capable and promising young man. His successor to the Headmastership of the Dayanand

High School, Bakhshi Ram Rattan B.A., B.T., joined the institution in 1905.

These young men were picked out by Lala Hansraj, some time after years of patient study. Most of them began their apprenticeship while they were still students of the College. Very often they served as his personal assistants, helping him to dispose of his correspondence. This was no small affair. The Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha of which he was the President had no staff of its own, the President and the Secretary between them personally dealt with all the correspondence in connection with the work of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, the Frontier Province, and parts of Sind, Baluchistan and Kashmir. It was very exacting work; but those who came to help Lala Hansraj soon got interested in the handling of his correspondence, and the contact thus established became very intimate.

Some of these Life Members played an importtant part in drawing others to their order. Thus Bhai Parma Nand became the means of introducing Lala Sain Das and Lala Diwan Chand to Lala Hansraj. Lala Ram Chand M.A., helped him to chose his successor, Bakhshi Ram Rattan. Some, like Bhai Parma Nand, went through a still more severe training, being tried in various capacities in the Arya Samajic and allied institutions.

These young men were later joined by Pundit Todar Mal M.A., and Lala Mehr Chand M.A., the first as Professor of Sanskrit, the second as Assistant Professor of Science. There were some losses as well. Lala Gokal Chand M.A., resigned in 1908 and Bhai Parma Nand in 1910.

Every opportunity was given to the 'Life Members' to make themselves more useful to the institution and the Arya Samaj. Some Arya Samajists from Africa sent a donation to Mahatma Munshi Ram, then Governor of the *Gurukula*, Kangri, with

a request for an Arya Samajist preacher to be sent to South Africa. When Mahatma Munshi Ram failed to secure any one, the donors transferred their gift to Lala Hansraj and asked him to depute an Arya Samajist missionary for the work. Bhai Parma Nand was thereupon sent out and Lala Hansraj himself undertook to do the major portion of Bhai Parma Nand's work with the College classes. Bhai Parma Nand's tour in South Africa made history. For the first time the South African 'white' met an Indian who was culturally their equal and in some ways their superior. So far they had only known Indians as indentured labourers, or as men who came to make money out of the presence of the Indian indentured labour in Africa. As Mr. C. F. Andrews later on testified, under Bhai Parma Nand's inspiration the Arya Samaj temples in South Africa became the one place on that continent where 'whites' and 'blacks' could come together without any questions being asked. From South Africa, Bhai Parma Nand went to London to study for a British Degree in History.

A fund was created by Lala Lajpat Rai for enabling promising young men to receive foreign education. In 1909 advantage was taken of this to send Lala Sain Das M.A., to Cambridge for a British Degree in Natural Sciences. He was successful and returned in 1911. This was mainly due to Lala Hansraj; it was he who encouraged young Sain Das when he seemed to be rather despondent of success in England, and who undertook to keep Sain Das's family under his own roof in order to reconcile him to the separation.

Under Lala Hansraj's guidance and inspiration, these young men did not spare themselves in the cause of the College or the Arya Samaj. As intended, they became permanent members of the College staff, maintaining year in and year out the tradition which the Dayanand College had been founded to keep alive. They not only lectured to

their classes but kept a close contact with their students as well. They attended the anniversaries of the Arya Samajes in the mofussil, they addressed the weekly congregations of the Arya Samaj at Lahore, and during the holidays and in the vacation they also lectured outside Lahore. In various capacities, they organized the work of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, Baluchistan, Kashmir, and elsewhere in and out of India. When any call was made for relief work or social reconstruction, Lala Hansraj could confidently put his hand to the task, sure that in this band of workers, if nowhere else, he would be able to find willing lieutenants, cheerfully prepared to undertake whatever work was entrusted to them. It is necessary to remember that the College staff then was not as large as it is to-day, and the presence of four Life Members on the staff, besides Lala Hansraj, meant much more than it would have done with a bigger staff. Further, the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha had no Updeshak on its rolls. Such missionaries as there were then were working on the College staff and their number was not very large. As a result the Life Members had necessarily to take the chief part in the missionary work of the Arya Samaj at that time. The presence of these members thus proved very useful to Lala Hansraj for the successful carrying out of his work both in the College and outside. Their frequent visits to the mofussil also proved a source of constant encouragement and inspiration.

The experiment fully justified the hopes of its promoters. It was soon felt necessary to revise the scale of honorarium that had been originally proposed. The changes, however, came gradually and sometimes accidentally. In May 1906, the outbreak of plague at Lahore made suitable accommodation in the city rather scarce and this led to a rise in the rent of residential houses. Lala Hansraj, therefore, suggested that Rs. 10/- a month

be sanctioned as the house rent for every Life Member. From a temporary provision to cover an accidental emergency this soon developed into a permanent allowance and was raised to Rs. 15 in 1907 and converted into a house and servant allowance. In 1909, this was raised to Rs. 25. The Life Members were some time reluctant to take advantage of these increased facilities but, in the end, they were prevailed upon to accept them in the interest of the institution.

The question of constituting them into a regular order was also soon raised because as Bakhshi (now the Hon'ble Mr. Justice) Tek Chand, the General Secretary of the Dayanand College Managing Committee, wrote on March 5, 1906, "Considering the ability and qualifications of our Life Members, the sacrifices they have made and having in view their increasing number, it seems desirable that rules be framed for them." However, it took the Committee six years to decide the question satisfactorily, and it was only on April 7, 1912—ten days after Lala Hansraj had retired from the Principalship of the Dayanand College—that the rules for Life Members were finally approved by the Dayanand College Society. Thus was the Order of Life Members brought into formal existence. The main change now introduced was that they were invited to take a share in the management of the various institutions by being called upon to appoint one fourth of their number as representatives on the Dayanand College Managing Committee. Lala Hansraj's foresight in bringing the Order into existence and guiding it successfully during the period of its inception was thus fully justified.

To complete the story it is necessary to add that new recruits continued to be enrolled even after his retirement from the Principalship. Malik Hukam Chand, Chaudhri Goverdhan Lal Dutta,

Raizada Amar Nath Bali, Pundit Bhagwad Dutt, Pundit Bahadur Mal, Pundit Diwan Chand Sharma, Pundit Vishwa Bandhu Shastri, Pundit Sri Ram Sharma, Pundit Surendra Mohan, Dr. Asa Nand Panjratan, and Lala Suraj Bhan, joined the order of Life Members at Lahore while Lala Gian Chand Mahajan, Lala Amolak Ram, Lala Sant Ram Sayal and Lala Chaman Lal, joined it at Jullundur. At Hoshiarpur, Lala Ram Das and Pundit Ralla Ram are serving in the D.A.-V. College. Pundit Wazir Chand, at Una, Lala Lal Chand, at Multan and Lala Ram Lal Sapra, at Lyallpur are serving the same cause.

The Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha also set up an order of Life Members when the Lakhpat Rai Sewa Sangh was established. Pundit Rishi Ram, served here for several years as an Arya Missionary working in the Punjab as well as several other parts of India, in South Africa and in Europe.

Most of these Life Members were selected by Lala Hansraj himself. Others were drawn by his noble example. In every case his was the final voice in deciding the various questions regarding their admission.

Since his retirement, the Order he set up has continued to prove its usefulness in various ways. His selection of right men for the Order has invariably proved successful. Of those who joined the Order, while he was Principal, Lala Sain Das became his successor in the Dayanand College, Lahore ; Lala Diwan Chand became Principal of the Dayanand College, Cawnpore in 1919 ; Bakhshi Ram Rattan succeeded Lala Sain Das as Principal of the Dayanand College, Lahore in 1931 ; and Lala Mehr Chand has been Principal of the Dayanand College since October 1935. The Life Members have served the institution and the Arya Samaj well. They have gone out as missionaries into other parts of India as well as abroad,

discharged exacting duties as the Secretaries of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, edited its official organ the *Arya Gazette*, and served the Arya Samajic cause by many other activities. They have enabled the Dayanand College to be run at a very low cost—so much so that the last University Enquiry Committee was astonished at the figures.



Mahatma Hansraj with his family

CHAPTER X

End of a Chapter

By the year 1911 the Dayanand College Society had been working for a quarter of a century. The School founded in 1886 had by now become a first grade College teaching upto the M. A. (Sanskrit) in the Arts and B.Sc. in the Science Faculty. A successful Engineering class was also being maintained where students were given instructions in Civil Engineering. There was a Vedic Department and also an Updeshik class where students were not only prepared for the highest examination in the Oriental Faculty of the Punjab University but were also trained as Arya Samajic preachers. An Ayurvedic Department guided the students in their Ayurvedic studies. Some provision for technical education also existed in the form of tailoring and carpentry classes. A Fellowship enabled its holders to pursue higher studies in Sanskrit. For some time the Dayanand Brahmachari Ashram had made an attempt at setting up a Boarding School combining the best features of an English Public School with the eastern ideals of the *Gurukula.*

In the College provision was made for instruction in all subjects upto the B.A. and B.Sc. standard. The results in the various University examinations had almost always been very gratifying. For example in the B.A. examination of 1910, its students topped the list of successful candidates in Sanskrit, Pure Mathematics, Chemistry, History and Economics. Similarly in 1911 its students obtained the first places in English, Applied Mathematics, Pure Mathematics and Sanskrit in

the B.A. The earlier years tell a similar story. The College was the largest institution of its kind not only in the Punjab but in the whole of upper India. Moreover, it had come to be one of the best equipped and best run institutions in the country. The Government and the University had both recognized this fact. On one occasion when the Government wanted to close its Engineering classes, it could find no other institution better qualified to take over this work than the Dayanand College. We have already seen how the University made over its Ayurvedic classes to the College.

In other respects as well the College had made rapid progress. It had now its own magnificent Science Block. Its Arts Block was ready for occupation. Its hostel was the largest in the Province, though still insufficient for all its needs. The school was occupying some rooms in the College Croft and the building put up originally to accommodate the High School and the College Department.

The College possessed certain unique features. Thanks to the generosity of Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh it had a Riding Club, the only one of its kind in the province. Again it took advantage of India's interest in Japan, which had been roused by the Japanese victory against Russia to appoint a Japanese lecturer on the staff to give instruction in the Japanese language. Again, it was the only institution in the Punjab which made arrangements for its staff to pursue higher studies through a "Foreign Study Scholarships" Fund.

Above all, the venture that had been started with not a few misgivings had at last proved, that given the chance, Indians could not only establish and maintain successful educational institutions, but could become pioneers in certain educational spheres as well. The Dayanand College had weathered the storm created by Lord Curzon's obvious attempt at tightening official control over

the educational institutions in India. It had been growing from strength to strength ever since its inception. The capital fund in 1887 stood at Rs. 64,456. The first annual budget was a modest one with an income of Rs. 6820 and an expenditure of Rs. 6700. On January 1, 1911, the capital fund stood at Rs. 831,419 and the current income at Rs. 66,623. To this must be added donations received for various purposes and other extraordinary receipts. These brought the funds that passed through the hands of the Managing Committee in 1911 to Rs. 1,74,805. As against this, the current expenditure amounted to Rs. 62,677. In 1911 the amount of scholarships and prizes paid out of various endowments amounted to Rs. 3243, about one half of the total expenditure in 1886. The Dayanand College had thus amply justified the hopes of its founders.

In the Easter of 1911 the College celebrated its coming of age by holding the first jubilee celebrations. In an exhaustive survey of the work of the last twenty-five years, Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand drew the following picture of the Dayanand College as it then stood :—

"The small sapling planted in 1886 in the Mandir of Arya Samaj has now grown into a banyan tree and is one of the biggest and foremost—in fact the biggest and foremost—educational institution in the land. There is a College giving instruction up to the highest class, making ample provision for science teaching including qualifications necessary for admission into the Medical Faculty, and a magnificent Boarding House—undoubtedly the best of its kind—attached to it. There is provision for Theology, for Engineering, for Ayurveda, for research into Sanskrit literature, for Tailoring, and there exist scholarships for attracting students of other provinces, for giving foreign education, and for teaching foreign languages."

The part Lala Hansraj had played during all these years can best be described in the words of Lala Lajpat Rai. Writing in the *Arya Samaj*, in 1914 he paid this glowing tribute to him :—

" These efforts and sacrifices might have ended in nothing but for the timely offer of a young man who agreed to give his time free. This young man, Lala Hansraj, had just graduated after a brilliant University career and had an equally bright future before him. The call of duty to religion and to the motherland, however, proved too strong to be ignored, and he offered to serve the Institution as a teacher free of any remuneration, his elder brother agreeing to share his scanty salary with him. For the first two years he served as Honorary Headmaster and then for twenty-four years consecutively served as Honorary Principal.

" This sacrifice made it possible for the promoters to open the first department of the College *i.e.*, the School, in 1886. Lala Hansraj has ever since been the guiding star and mainstay of this Institution. In the interests of the College he has not spared himself in any way. His personality is unique in the history of the modern Punjab, the only other of whom we could speak in the same breath being Lala Munshi Ram, the founder of the Gurukula at Kangri. It is impossible to think of the Arya Samaj without these two names next to that of the great founder, Dayanand himself. It is equally impossible to think of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College without Lala Hansraj. There are other names worthy of remembrance and of those who have by their devotion and service contributed to the success of the College, but the one person among the founders, whose name will always occupy the first place in the respect of those who love the College, and whose name and life-work stands or falls with this College, is Lala Hansraj. While others have had other interests in life, professional,

social, political or industrial, his sole concern has been the service of the D. A.-V. College and the Arya Samaj. There may have been some others who have, perhaps, given the best in their life to this Institution, but he alone stands as one who has given his all for it. For full twenty-eight years it has been the one object of his devotion. In his work he has met with all kinds of opposition, criticism, and misfortune. He has been misunderstood, misrepresented and maligned. His best friends have sometimes differed from him, but he has stood firm, leading a life of unique simplicity, of unostentatious poverty, of unassuming renunciation, and of single-minded devotion—a life irreproachable in private character and unique in public service."

The Jubilee was duly celebrated. The Arya Samajists who had gathered together on that occasion from various parts of the country went back to their places congratulating themselves as well as the College in having both Lala Hansraj, its first Principal, and Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand its first President, still among them. They little knew what fate had in store for them.

One of the most remarkable traits of Lala Hansraj's character was his anxiety to lay down one office after another unobstrusively. He seems to have initiated the discussion about his successor as early as 1909 when, as his *Diary* records, the College Sub-Committee finally left the question open. In the formal discussions that took place in the Committee, he expressed no opinion and watched the members condemn every likely successor in turn. The question of sending some member of the staff to England for further studies was also raised but nothing was done about it either. Lala Hansraj, however, succeeded in persuading Lala Lajpat Rai to suggest later on that Lala Sain Das, Professor of Physical Science, be sent to England

for higher studies. As the funds for foreign education came out of a gift of Lala Lajpat Rai, this settled the question and it was decided to send Lala Sain Das to England.

The decision then taken was not as simple a matter as it might seem to us to-day. The number of Punjabees with British academic qualifications at that time was strictly limited. It is doubtful whether outside the ranks of the State Scholars there were any Punjabees at the time with high British academic qualifications. Of course there was a sprinkling of barristers-at-law, but the 'call to bar' in England did not at this time involve much work. Thus the decision to send Lala Sain Das to England was not without its risks. Lala Hansraj, however, had always delighted in taking risks and when he had once made up his mind there was no going back on the decision. Lala Sain Das amply justified his selection by securing a good Honours Degree at Cambridge. He returned to India in 1911.

As usual, Lala Hansraj first broached the subject of his retirement from the Principalship of the College to his elder brother, Lala Mulkraj, who readily fell in with Lala Hansraj's view that now that he had completed twenty-five years' service he should retire and make room for a younger man. Lala Hansraj thereupon opened his mind to some of his personal friends. They discovered that, plead with him as they might, there was no shaking his resolve to retire from office, now that he was convinced that he could get a successor who could be expected to carry on his work well. He had done his share. It was time for others to step into the place which he would have to vacate sooner or later, sooner rather than later, if things were left to him. He was not one of those who believed in the comfortable principle of "after me the deluge."

These discussions occupied some time. Then came the question of admissions to the College classes —it was rather a delicate time for a change of Principal. It would have been like changing horses in mid-stream. No wonder that he waited for a more propitious moment. On November 27, 1911, immediately after the anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj, he addressed the following letter to Rai Bahadur Lala Lal Chand, President Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Managing Committee :—

D. A.-V. College, Lahore,
Dated the 27*th November*, 1911.

My Dear Rai Bahadur,

"It was in 1885, after I had graduated, that I wrote to your Committee offering my services to the D. A.-V. College as an honorary member of its staff. My brother and myself felt at the time that in addition to the best efforts that were being put forth to raise a fitting memorial to Shri Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the greatest sage of modern times, something more was needed to further the cause which all of us had so much at heart. With this feeling, I decided to devote my best to the D.A.-V. College and work for its success.

"You and your Committee were kind enough to accept my offer and appoint me, first the Headmaster and later on the Principal of this sacred institution.

"The Institution was opened on June 1, 1886. It had a small beginning, but by the grace of God, its growth has been wonderful. At present it occupies a unique position among the educational institutions of this country. Numerically it is the biggest institution in the Province, comprising 1565 in the School Department and 672 students in the College,

"Not only in numbers, but in educational

efficiency, the D, A.-V. College and School have held their own in competition with the foremost institutions of the land.

"The Arya Samaj has of course greatly benefitted by the mental and moral resources which the College has always placed at its disposal, while the influence it has exercised on the public life of the province cannot be ignored.

"The Institution completed twenty-five years of its existence on 30th May, 1911. Twenty-five years of my service to the College also expired on the same date. In obedience to the vow, I took in 1885, I have served, with my whole heart and might, the great Master through whom I received the light of Vedic truth.

"By the first June, 1911, I had made up my mind to retire from my post as the Principal of our beloved College and I had received the approval of my brother to the step, but as I had not been able to secure the consent of some friends, I did not communicate my intentions to you. Even when these friends had agreed, I delayed, waiting for the time when admissions into the College classes would be over, as I feared that my retirement might disturb the minds of my students at that time. Now that the admissions are over, I beg to tender my resignation and request you and the Managing Committee to be kind enough to accept it and arrange to relieve me before January 31, 1912.

"It is my good fortune and a happy coincidence that I retire under the presidentship of one, under whom I accepted office when the institution was opened. This is a matter of extreme satisfaction to me and I divine a purpose underneath it.

"Sir, your disinterested and sturdy patriotism, purity of administration and soundness of judgment have always inspired me with high regard

for your personality. I thank you and the members of the Managing Committee for the courtesy and consideration that have always been shown to me. Further, I request you to tender my thanks to our Ex-Presidents, Bhagat Ishwar Das M.A., and Lala Dwarka Das M.A., for the kind treatment I experienced at their hands.

"Praying for the welfare and prosperity of the College,

Yours obediently,
HANSRAJ."

Though the College Sub-Committee had given some thought to the question of selecting his successor as early as 1909, it had been more or less an academic discussion. It was like considering in advance something inevitable, yet still far distant. But outside the members of the College Sub-Committee, no one knew anything about even these consultations. Thus to the Arya Samajist public at large, this letter came as a bolt from the blue. That Hansraj should cut himself asunder from the Dayanand College staggered their imagination. Dayanand College and Hansraj, Hansraj and the Dayanand College had come to be synonymous terms. To think of the one without the other was impossible, and now they were being called upon not only to contemplate that such a thing might happen, they were being asked actively to assist in rendering it practicable! But they knew their Hansraj and with that knowledge came the realization that it was no sabre-rattling in which he was engaged—a thing public men in India and elsewhere are so fond of indulging in when anything goes wrong. They would not have him otherwise, however. His stubbornness—mostly in matters which concerned him personally—at times might have seemed unreasonable to them. He was

not yet forty-eight—an age at which others usually step into such a high office; and here he was telling them in all seriousness that, believe it or not, he was going to retire. Perforce they bowed to the inevitable.

On December 22, the resignation of Lala Hansraj was considered by the College Sub-Committee which forwarded it to the Managing Committee "with the greatest regret." Naturally before Lala Hansraj's resignation could be accepted it was necessary to appoint his successor. Since Lala Sain Das's successful return from England, the Committee was more or less unanimous in looking upon him as Lala Hansraj's successor. But the staff of the College then included Lala Devi Dayal B.A., who though he had worked as Professor of Mathematics for a very short period only, had been on the staff of the Institution since 1886 in various capacities. Moreover he had been Lala Sain Das's teacher in the College. Two meetings of the College Sub-Com mittee had, therefore, to be held to get round this embarrassing situation. Lala Hansraj rose to the occasion. He wrote a letter to Lala Devi Dayal telling him of the likely appointment of Lala Sain Das as his successor and requesting him to wish his old student success in that august office. Lala Devi Dayal gracefully accepted the situation in his reply. On February 22, 1912, Lala Devi Dayal was specially invited to attend the meeting of the College Sub-Committee, when this question was likely to be decided. As the resolution of the Managing Committee has it, "in the presence and with the consent of Professor Devi Dayal" Lala Sain Das M.A., B.Sc. (Cantab), was recommended to the Managing Committee as Lala Hansraj's successor in the Principalship of the College. It was felt, however, that nobody's shoulders were broad enough to carry all the burden even of the College administration which Lala Hansraj had been carrying. It was decided there-

fore, to create the new office of Chief Superintendent of the College Hostel, and Lala Devi Dayal was appointed the first Chief Superintendent.

To few mortals was it given to quit their office with the same satisfaction as Lala Hansraj could justly experience at his own retirement. Joining the institution in 1886 when it was only a great venture—probably the riskiest in the educational history of the country—he left it now as one of the foremost educational institutions in the country, in some respects the foremost. He it was who had translated the dreams of the Arya Samajists into an actuality. What the College had become by the time when he left we have seen in the previous chapters. Few received such congratulations on their retirement from a high office, worthily filled, as Lala Hansraj did. How he felt himself can best be described in his own words to his students in reply to their address. "I had a mind to thank those persons in public who have helped to fulfil my vow, but then I thought that they might not like this thanking them in public. When on March 28, I handed over the charge of Principalship of the College, the first thought that came into my mind was to touch the feet of those who had helped me to fulfil my vow. So I touched the feet of my brother and sister-in-law. Then it came to my mind that I should touch the feet of those as well whom I have been considering as my elders, but for whose kindness I could not have fulfilled my vow. I had a great respect for the late Lala Sain Das and the late Lala Lal Chand and as both of them have passed away I paid tribute to their memory. After this I thought it proper to touch the feet of those among my elders and colleagues who were alive, and I touched the feet of Rai Mulraj, Bhagat Ishar Das, Lala Dwarka Das and Lala Lajpat Rai."

What his colleagues of the Managing Committee

felt about his retirement was expressed by its General Secretary, Bakhshi Tek Chand. In his report for 1911-12, commenting upon the retirement of Lala Hansraj, he declared :—

"It was in 1886 that Lala Hansraj, then a young man of 22, fresh from the University made his memorable offer to the Managing Committee of the proposed Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College to serve as an honorary member of its staff. The offer was accepted and Lala Hansraj began work as the Headmaster of the School on June 1, 1886. The work that he has since done and the invaluable services that he had rendered to the Institution are a matter of history, and it will fall to the lot of the future historian of the educational, social and religious development of the Panjab, to measure the debt of gratitude which the Hindus in general and the Arya Samajists in particular, owe to him. The birth, growth, and development of the D. A.-V. College has been so indissolubly associated with the name of Lala Hansraj, that although it had been generally known for some time that Lala Hansraj contemplated retirement from the staff of the College on the completion of 25 years of his service in June 1911, yet when his resignation was published in the papers in December last the entire Hindu community of the province was convulsed to a considerable extent. The publication of the resignation created a stir in the province, for people could hardly conceive of the Dayanand College without Lala Hansraj as its honoured and honorary Principal. Efforts were made to press Lala Hansraj to withdraw his resignation, but in deference to his definitely expressed wishes, it was accepted by the Managing Committee on January 28, 1912, and Lala Hansraj made over the charge of the post of the Principal of the College on the 28th March, 1912. Lala Hansraj is fortunately still present with us and perhaps it is not desirable to speak in detail of his work

in the College. Yet no apology appears to be necessary, if on the completion of his unique services as the Principal of the College, it be said that for the last quarter of a century, and more, he has with consummate ability and with signal success discharged the onerous and delicate duties of the Principal of this very important institution. Those, who have had the honour of working with him know that it would be difficult to find a man so noble-minded and pure, so true to his word and so unflinching in his determination, so firm in the discharge of his duty, and yet so submissive to the constitution, so honoured by his pupils, and so loved by his colleagues—indeed, a true *Aryan Acharya*, in every sense of the term."

How the Arya Samajist world viewed this even can be best described in the words of the leader of the other section of the Arya Samaj, Mahatma Munshi Ram, the late Swami Shraddha Nand, who subscribing himself as his 'comrade in arms' wrote as follows in his *Sat Dharm Pracharak* :—

"In the last issue of the *Arya Gazette*, was printed the resignation of Lala Hansraj. Hansraj is leaving his dear College after a continuous service of twenty-five years. I congratulate him upon his success there. I have had differences of opinion on many religious questions with my comrade in arms, Lala Hansraj. We differ from each other in our methods of uplifting the country and serving humanity. But it is worthy to be remembered that since the death of Swami Dayanand, his has been the finest example among the Arya Samajists of self-sacrifice in the service of humanity. By his serving for twenty-five years honorarily he has rendered a great service not only to those who think alike with him but also to the public at large whom he has shown the path of self-sacrifice. To express one's feeling of gratefulness to him, is just an act of common courtesy. '

"To those associated with the management of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, the separation of Lala Hansraj would be a matter of great regret; the present position of the College is practically the result of his selfless work. We can also imagine the regrets of his students as well, who, they say, are so much attached to him. But on his separation from the Dayanand College, I too feel a void in my life. May God give strength to his successor so that he should continue to make the College useful for the sons of mother India.

"Lala Hansraj! who is there more fortunate than yourself today? You are preparing to leave one centre of interest, in order to devote yourself to another high ideal. My comrade in arms, Lala Hansraj! I pray to God that He may bless your pious intentions."

The *Arya Musafir*, Agra, wrote in a similar strain.

"We cannot but admit that the spirit with which Lala Hansraj has served the educational mission of the Arya Samaj, is not only praiseworthy but places an ideal of self-sacrifice before his countrymen. His character embodies all the qualities which should be present in a truthful and religious minded person........ One of the greatest things about him is that he carried out all that he set out to do and put his shoulder to. The world may change, but not the resolution of Lala Hansraj. The severest tests could not shake him. There he has always stood firm like a rock......

"Strange as it may seem, as his appointment to this position was a matter of satisfaction to the Arya Samajists, his retirement is no less so."

His retirement from the Principalship did not terminate his connection with the College, it became the beginning of a new chapter. Few retirements have been more significant in this way. He was not retiring in order to spend his well-earned

rest in leisured retirement. Nor was he ending this period of public service to India, in order to enter upon another wherein he could make use of his undoubted talents and abilities for personal ends. It is necessary to emphasize here that he was only forty-seven at the time. He was retiring primarily that he might be able to devote himself to a larger extent to the task of direct religious propaganda. It was this that he had in his mind when he wrote his letter of resignation in November, 1911. Fate decided otherwise. Before he had actually retired from Principalship, Lala Lal Chand the President of the Managing Committee, so long his ' friend, philosopher, and guide ', died on February 12, 1912. Lala Hansraj was unanimously elected to succeed him ' as soon as he should retire from the Principalship of the College.' Thus his direct and intimate connection with the College affairs continued for another seven years.

CHAPTER XI

A Period of Trial

Hardly had Lala Hansraj enjoyed his two years of well-earned repose from the cares of office when he was called upon to pass through a period of trial such as falls to the lot of very few persons. It was then that even those who had known him intimately before, fully realized the gigantic stature of his personality. He seemed to move in those days in a different plane, unconcerned with the cares of this world even when they seemed to affect him most.

As we have seen already, he had been married to Shrimati Thakur Devi in 1876. The first male fruit of this union was Balraj, born in 1889 at Wazirabad where his uncle, Lala Mulkraj, then lived. Lala Mulkraj announced the birth to the happy father in a telegram which read, " A son born. I name him Balraj. Expect him to be a *bali* for the country." Little did the fond parents or the sentimental uncle realize how closely the new born child would one day just miss becoming a sacrifice. Balraj was brought up with care and affection by his parents. Of course, he enjoyed greater freedom than would have been allowed if he had not been for so long an only son of so busy a father.

He received his education in the Dayanand High School. His regular progress there was interrupted by his being sent to the Dayanand Brahmachari Ashram. As we have already seen, this attempt to set up a residential School in connection with the Dayanand College failed and Balraj resumed his regular course of studies in the Dayanand School. After matriculating he joined



Shrimati Thakar Devi.

the College. He took his Degree in 1911. He had inherited his father's interest in the study of history and had taken it up as one of his subjects for his Degree. After graduating he went to Jodhpur as tutor to the younger brothers of the Maharaja of Jodhpur and the young sons of Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh of Idar. Life in princely India, even though in the household of an Arya Samajist prince, does not seem to have impressed him much and he came back in October, 1913, on a year's leave to resume his higher studies.

He joined the Government College, Lahore, for his M.A. in History, as at that time there were no post-graduate classes in any subject except Sanskrit in the Dayanand College. On February 19, 1914, while he was visiting Mr. Khushi Ram, a class-fellow of his, the Punjab Police came to search Mr. Khushi Ram's room at 10 p.m. Balraj's presence there was duly noted, though he was allowed to leave his friend's room, who was arrested.

Their curiosity roused, the Police came next morning to search the portion occupied by Balraj in his father's house. They seemed to be in search of some papers. Not a scrap of incriminating material was found. The Police, however, arrested Balraj and took him away.

Rather foolishly, as even their own presentation of the case was to prove later on, the Police decided to search the entire house occupied by Lala Hansraj. Balraj had been living in rooms which were cut off from the rest of the house. The search of those rooms had revealed nothing incriminating. To extend the search, therefore, to Lala Hansraj's house was nothing short of foolishness. Their failure to find any suspicious material in Lala Hansraj's room caused the Police to carry out their search of Lala Hansraj's house in a rather stupid manner. They did not seem to know what their search was likely to produce. They did not possess

enough sense even to decide what might be useful to them in their case. So they seized every scrap of paper, printed, typed or manuscript, which they found in the house. So zealous were they in the discharge of their duties that they carried away all the copies of the Punjab University Calendar in its various editions. They carried their sacrilege to the extent of removing all the religious books of Lala Hansraj, including the copies of the most sacred of the Hindu scriptures, the *Vedas*. Thus they made up for their failure in recovering anything even faintly bearing on the case by the cartload of material which they removed from the house.

From all quarters indignant protest was voiced at the indignity to which Lala Hansraj had been so gratuitously subjected. The press in the Punjab with a united voice, condemned it as an outrage on one of the most respected religious leaders of the province. Beyond the province as well, the search and the way in which it was carried out raised a storm of indignation. But worse was to follow.

Balraj was prosecuted for being a member of a conspiracy to commit murder, organised by Rash Behari Bose in the Punjab. The one overt act alleged was the placing of a bomb in the Lawrence Gardens which had resulted in the death of a peon Ram Padarath; though they asserted it had a more nefarious object. Arrested on February 21, Lala Balraj was brought before the District Magistrate on March 4, who gave the Police another fortnight for completing their inquiries, and fixed March 19 for the hearing of the case. While arrangements were being made for his defence at Lahore Lala Hansraj learnt on March 15, that his son along with other accused in the case, had been taken to Delhi, by the Police. The Crown had applied to the Chief Court for transfer of the case to Delhi. The court, without either informing the accused

or allowing their legal advisers to oppose the application, transferred the case to Delhi. On March 17, the accused were produced before Mr. V. Connolly, First Class Magistrate of Delhi. Naturally the accused could take no part in the proceedings without the presence of their legal advisers, who knew nothing about the transfer of the case from Lahore to Delhi. The case was then adjourned to March 24. In this way Lala Hansraj learnt that his son was being tried at Delhi. Finding the Punjab Police moving so mysteriously, Lala Hansraj put in an application for the retransfer of the case to Lahore before the Chief Court on March 20. The Government Advocate was informed and allowed to oppose the application. The Chief Court after hearing both sides refused to order the retransfer of the case to Lahore. On March 24, the preliminary hearing of the case was commenced before Mr. Connolly at Delhi. Lala Balraj was defended mainly by Pundit Lakhpat Rai of Hissar and the Hon'ble Lala Kanshi Ram of Ferozepore. From time to time, they were helped by several other eminent lawyers, including Bakhshi Tek Chand, Dr. G. C. Narang and Mr. M. S. Bhagat.

The Crown case turned on the evidence of the approver, Dina Nath. So extensive was the conspiracy supposed to be that the Crown produced as many as 193 witnesses. On April 30, after a continuous hearing for over five weeks, the Crown closed its case. Naturally the accused reserved their defence for the Sessions. The Government Advocate submitted that Balraj and certain other accused should be committed to the Sessions to take their trial under Sections 120-B and 124-A I. P. C. for sedition. Accordingly on May 12, the magistrate pronounced orders committing the accused to take their trial at the Sessions but under Sections 302 and 120-B.

On May 21, the case began before Mr. Harrison,

Special Sessions Judge. As before Lala Balraj was mainly defended by Hon'ble Lala Kanshi Ram and Pundit Lakhpat Rai. A part of the Grand Hotel in Delhi was converted into a court room for the hearing of the case as the Police thought it could be easily guarded. Admission to the court was strictly limited. On May 21, the case was adjourned to May 25. On May 26 the late Mr. C. R. Dass, who had been briefed on behalf of Lala Balraj and had been ably assisted by Bakhshi Tek Chand in his study of the case, raised a preliminary objection that the Sessions Court was not competent to try the case without the sanction of the Local Government which was necessary under the law. He was, however, overruled and the Crown was allowed to open its case. Mr. Dass had been engaged mainly with a view to advise the defence about the lines on which it should conduct the case. The Crown now began to conduct the examination-in-chief of the witnesses in Urdu which Mr. Dass did not understand. On May 29 he left. Pundit Lakhpat Rai and Lala Kanshi Ram were from time to time assisted by Lala Durga Das, Lala Diwan Chand Saini and others.

On July 4, matters took a sensational and cruel turn. As the court was about to rise for the day, the defence received a telegram from Lala Hansraj who was then at Lahore, that Lala Balraj's mother was on her deathbed. An application for bail was put in on behalf of Lala Balraj to enable him to visit his dying mother. This was rejected, but the Sessions Judge gave orders that Lala Balraj might be taken to Lahore under Police custody and allowed to see his mother. This was communicated to Lala Hansraj by telegram; he accepted the arrangement, even though it was feared that this meeting between a dying mother and a handcuffed son could not be productive of much good to her dying soul.

As Lala Hansraj sat waiting by the death-bed of his wife, cheering her up by the news that she might be able to meet her son any moment, another telegram arrived which dashed all these hopes to the ground. The Police reported to the Sessions Judge that it could not make adequate arrangements for taking Lala Balraj to Lahore, meeting his mother for a few minutes and bringing him back. Whether it feared that the train on which Lala Balraj was to be taken would be dynamited or an attempt made to rescue him at Lala Hansraj's residence has never been disclosed! The Sessions Judge cancelled his previous orders, and Lala Hansraj was informed by telegram, that Lala Balraj would not be allowed to see his dying mother. A worse example of the wooden character of the bureaucratic system of Government in India could hardly be imagined. The might of the British Empire in India failed before such a small contingency as the movement of a prisoner from Delhi to Lahore. Shrimati Thakur Devi died on July 7, in the early hours of the morning.

The case pursued its weary course. On August 6, the prosecution having closed its case, Lala Balraj put in his written statement. On August 27, Mr. E. Norton, who had acquired an all-India reputation as a great criminal lawyer, started arguing the case on behalf of Lala Balraj. He urged that the prosecution had failed to prove Lala Balraj's complicity in any act of conspiracy which it had been alleged the accused had formed for the purpose of waging war against the King Emperor. All that it had been able to establish was the innocuous fact, which the defence did not dispute, that he knew some of the accused.

On September 1, the assessors were asked to give their opinion in the case. The Punjab system in criminal cases is a sorry travesty of the British trial by jury. There are usually three assessors.

They give an opinion , rather than a verdict on the evidence which has been laid before them. The opinion again is personal and individual and not collective. One of the assessors pronounced lala Balraj guilty whereas two declared him innocent. The Sessions Judge fixed October 5, for pronouncing the judgment. He sentenced Lala Balraj to transportation for life along with two other accused, while three more were sentenced to death.

The curtain rises again in the Punjab Chief Court at Lahore on January 4, 1915 when the hearing of the appeal commenced before Justice Sir Donald Johnstone and Mr. Justice Rattigan. Mr. Beechy, assisted by Bakhshi Tek Chand and Pundit Lakhpat Rai, appeared for Lala Balraj and commenced arguments on January 8. On February 10, orders were pronounced in the appeal reducing the sentence of Lala Balraj to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

The Chief Court held that there was reasonable ground to believe that a conspiracy to commit murder of Europeans and officials serving the British Government had been entered into between the various accused on various occasions beginning as early as 1908. This, they declared could not be proved by any direct evidence but it was possible to infer the existence of such a conspiracy because certain of the accused had committed murder. A bomb cap had been discovered in the house of another member of the group, and all the accused persons were concerned directly or indirectly with the distribution of literature which was intended to incite persons to commit murder. In the case of Lala Balraj, however, it was held that "It is not clearly proved that he was a member of the conspiracy prior to the date on which Ram Padarath was murdered", though the Court found it "satisfactorily established that he was a member of the conspiracy"—presumably after that murder—"and was actively

connected with the distribution of the *Liberty* leaflets." His presence in Khushi Ram's room was supposed to have "reference rather to the affairs of the conspiracy than a sudden desire to borrow a book from Khushi Ram." But the only connection with the conspiracy that the prosecution had been able to suggest was his alleged distribution of the *Liberty* leaflets which Dina Nath (the approver) was said to have given him for distribution. There was no other evidence for this except the confession of Dina Nath. His conviction under Sections 302 and 120-B was quashed but under Sections 302 and 109 of the Indian Penal Code, he was awarded, "the maximum sentence awardable under that Section, that of seven years' rigorous imprisonment." Mr. E. Norton had early foreseen this and had advised his client to take his case to the Privy Council where, he had assured him, he would certainly be acquitted. The outbreak of the Great War, however, made this doubtful and consequently no appeal was preferred before the Privy Council.

This bald statement of the facts of the case has said nothing of the demeanour of Lala Hansraj during this year of trial. He displayed an evenness of temper, and unruffled spirit, which no earthly trouble seemed able to disturb. He seemed to have been specially selected for trials this year. Lala Balraj was being tried in a case where he might have been sentenced to death. His wife became seriously ill and died while the case was still being heard. His elder brother Lala Mulkraj was caught in the financial crisis created by the banking crash of 1913 in the Punjab following upon the failure of the People's Bank. As the Managing Director of the Punjab Co-operative Bank—which incidently succeeded eventually in paying up all its liabilities with interest and in starting business again—he was naturally involved in the troubles that usually result from a bank going into liquidation. Thus when Lala Hansraj needed his help most his brother

found himself financially embarrassed. To crown all came the illness of his younger son, Yodhraj, who developed pneumonia in November, 1915.

All these trials, however, left Lala Hansraj unmoved. This was not the cold passivity of a lifeless stone but an exhibition at its highest of that *dhairyya* (patience), about which Hindu scriptures speak so much. Here was another Ram Chandra, undaunted in the face of the gravest calamity. When Lala Balraj was arrested the tender heart of his mother took it very seriously and she went into hysterics. Lala Hansraj calmly told her that if she continued like that, his attention would be distracted from the defence of their son, who would probably have to suffer the consequences of her lack of self-control. Like a wise woman she accepted the inevitable and never gave Lala Hansraj another anxious moment on account of her distress for her son.

On another occasion it was his eldest daughter who failed to understand the purpose behind it all —this trial of a modern Jonah by too irate a Jehovah. Tried beyond endurance by the death of her mother under such tragic circumstances, the serious illness of her younger brother, and the prosecution of Lala Balraj on so serious a charge, she broke down and cried out, " But, is there God ?" Lala Hansraj, whom nothing else had upset during the course of his trials, could not endure this blasphemy and rebuked her in tones which only a mind in tune with the Infinite could adopt.

As a close observer of his in those days recently remarked, Lala Hansraj seemed to be studying the case of his son as a lawyer does that of a client or a specialist that of a patient. Except when he was at Delhi, he went on discharging all his multifarious public duties scrupulously. Relatives, friends and admirers came from all corners of the country to express their sympathies with him. Instead of

a man stricken down with grief, they found him going about his usual work with that calm which is the sign of a mind at peace with his Maker. They were some time allowed no opportunity to express their sympathy. Try as they could, he would side-track them by his usual inquiries, public and private. When he was returning from Delhi after hearing that the Magistrate had committed his son to the Sessions, Lala Radha Ram, an old friend of his, met him at the Railway Station at Jullundur and successfully persuaded him to break his journey there. All the evening they went on discussing a hundred and one things in which they were interested. Neither by his tone nor by his expression, let alone by direct speech, did he allow his friends to learn that Lala Balraj had been committed to the Sessions. It was only the next morning, when he had left Jullundur, that they learnt the dire news in the newspapers.

Many of his old students, colleagues and admirers felt that they owed it to themselves, if not to him, to help him financially at this crisis in his life. To some of them he had given a helping hand when he was the Principal. Others felt they owed him a debt of gratitude, if not for personal favours, at least for his public services. The case soon became a *cause celebre* and they felt that his son needed the best legal advice that could be secured in the country. That would of course have cost a great deal. For example Mr. C. R. Dass was asked to lead the defence. He demanded a minimum fee of Rs. 18,000 a month. Mr. E. Norton, who was also suggested, would have probably charged a still higher fee. They were prepared to pool their resources and place any amount of money at his disposal for the defence of his son. But he would have none of it. While one of his old students, then a young lawyer, went to Calcutta to engage Mr. C. R. Dass, a brother lawyer in the High Court of Calcutta suggested that they could raise

enough money to conduct the case whether Lala Hansraj was willing or not. Large funds for the defence of similar cases had been raised in Bengal. Lala Diwan Chand told him in reply that if they collected money themselves and engaged an eminent lawyer, Lala Hansraj would instruct his son to refuse to give the lawyer any instructions and thus create a deadlock.

He gratefully accepted the offer of Pundit Lakhpat Rai and Hon'ble Lala Kanshi Ram to conduct the case without charging any fees. Friends as they were, Lala Hansraj felt that it would not be proper to refuse the handsome offer they were making. Under Sir Micheal O'Dwyer, to defend a case of this type was frowned on in the Punjab and most of the senior lawyers held aloof from such cases. To defend an accused seemed to be equivalent to sympathizing with the crime with which he stood charged. When Lala Kanshi Ram met the Lieutenant Governor during the course of the trial, Sir Micheal tried to impress upon him the enormity of his offence in undertaking to defend Lala Balraj. Fortunately, Lala Kanshi Ram was made of sterner stuff and refused to accept the gratuitous advice of the Lieutenant Governor.

After Balraj had been convicted, he was told that he should seek for pardon which would, it was promised, be readily granted. When he refused, it was suggested that he should consult his father before he gave his final answer. Lala Balraj agreed and forwarded the offer to his father. Promptly came the reply, "If you are guilty, you should purge your guilt by undergoing the punishment that has been awarded to you. If you are not guilty, the Government should let you off without your asking for pardon." There was no arguing with this answer.

As an under-trial prisoner, Balraj was allowed to receive food and fruit from outside. Some fruit

was, therefore, brought to Balraj; but he refused to accept it, declaring that he would soon have to do without it as a convict. Lala Hansraj at once replied "Enjoy the gifts of God, my son, when you have them. But do not get so much immersed in them as to yearn for them when you don't get them."

Lala Hansraj kept his public engagements as far as possible throughout this period. During the Easter recess while the Court was not sitting, he returned to Lahore in order to be present, as the President of the Dayanand College Managing Committee at the anniversary of the College, participated in all the functions, as if he had not a single care in the world. A week earlier, he addressed the weekly congregation of the Lahore Arya Samaj. On October 5, the Sessions Judge sentenced Lala Balraj to transportation for life, but we find Lala Hansraj making an appeal for the Dayanand College on the occasion of its anniversary in November next.

Even the death of his wife on July 7, 1914, failed to shake his equanimity. Ever since her marriage, she had proved herself a true helpmate to Lala Hansraj in his work. Coming from an orthodox family, she early adopted the Arya Samajic faith under the inspiration of Lala Hansraj. Then she became a leader of the women's section of the Arya Samaj at Lahore, serving as its President for several years.

It was, however, in the management of her household and the bringing up of her children that she displayed her finest qualities. To run the household of the Principal of a College on an allowance which ranged between Rs. 40 and Rs. 100 a month was not an easy task. There were visitors to be received, guests to be entertained, and other expenses to be incurred in connection with various affairs of the family. It was very much due to her

careful management that Lala Hansraj never had an occasion to regret the step that he had taken so early in youth—a step which led him not only to renounce the riches of the world but to be dependent on his brother for all his needs. It was the second aspect of the question which, under less happy circumstances, would have created endless quarrels in the family. But thanks to her and the wife of Lala Mulkraj, Lala Hansraj never had any such troubles to face. Lala Hansraj, who was a very severe judge of men and who was more critical of those near and dear to him than of any one else pronounced her, "a great Arya Samajic lady" in an entry in his *Diary*.

The Arya Girls' School is a solid sign of the work which she silently performed for the welfare of the girls and women of the city. Situated in the heart of the city, it was used both as a meeting place for the Women's Arya Samaj and as a Girls' School. Before Mahatma Gandhi had invented the technique of fasting for public purposes, she had silently resorted to it several times. The school would often need money and of course, she could not make any large contributions herself. But without any publicity, she would decide to fast till she had collected the requisite amount, some time going without meals for two or three days.

A hostel in connection with the Girls' School was opened. To start with, utensils were needed for it. She made a grim resolve that till she got the required pots and pans for the hostel mess, she would even go without water. By the evening she had collected the desired articles and it was only then that she quenched her thirst. A very interesting side of these campaigns was that she never approached any man for help in what she considered to be essentially a woman's cause. In fact the Girls' School at Lahore was one of the first public monuments to the enterprising spirit of the women of the Punjab.

When Lala Balraj was arrested, she had been ailing for some time. His arrest on a charge, which might result ina sentence of death, proved too much for her. She ceased to fight for her life. Lala Hansraj had to leave the defence of his son in the hands of his legal advisers at Delhi, in order to be near her during her last days. When the rush of visitors slackened a little, in the afternoon or in the evening, Lala Hansraj used to read the *Bhagwad Gita* and expound it to her.

The last hours of her life were embittered by the non-fulfilment of her desire to have a last glimpse of her son, Balraj. The British administration in India, particularly that of the Punjab under Sir Micheal O'Dwyer, had not yet become humane enough to take effective notice of such sentimental desires. She breathed her last in the early hours of July 7. Her funeral procession, followed by a large number of men and women of all communities, was such as Lahore had seldom seen before.

Out of his trials and tribulations emerged a Hansraj which not even his friends had known before. The widespread sympathy which he received from all corners of the country and from quarters which had never taken notice of either Lala Hansraj or his activities formed a testimony to the silent work that he had been doing in remaking the Punjab. Friends and foes alike discovered in him a man who compelled—nay extorted—admiration, for the very simple reason that he did not seem to care for it.

CHAPTER XII

Call of Social Reform

Besides his manifold educational and missionary activities, Mahatma Hansraj was also a great social reformer. He believed, however, in patient and steady constructive work rather than those whirlwind campaigns which usually end in smoke.

The Dayanand College and the School provided him with a fertile ground for sowing seeds of social reconstruction among the Hindus. The Hindu society suffers from nothing more than its strait-laced caste-system, with its rigid gradation of caste and sub-caste groups. He resolutely set his face against recognizing these gradations even in such an important matter as community dining. No separate caste messes were allowed to be set up in any of the hostels run by the Dayanand College, so that common dining among Hindus of all grades became an essential feature of these institutions. Here the students felt no curiosity to know the sub-caste of their fellow students ; after years of living together as members of the same hostel as class-fellows and contemporaries the young men would still remain ignorant of the caste grades of their fellow students. And it should be remembered that the hostels were not exclusively meant for Arya Samajists. It was thus a revolutionary change. To appreciate its importance one needs only refer to the failure of the Christian missionaries, at least until very recently, to put an end to the caste grades even among converts to Christianity. In certain Christian educational institutions in South India, separate messing arrangements had to be made for

Christian converts from the various grades of Hindu society. Even at Delhi in a missionary College until recently students of higher castes would not allow members of the so called lower castes to dine with them without making special arrangements for safeguarding their caste superiority.

The foundations that Lala Hansraj had laid truly and well in this matter showed their strength in 1926 when they stood the severest strain that orthodoxy had put on them. A student of the depressed classes (a Chamar) joined the College Hostel. The Brahman cooks refused to serve him meals in the hostel mess. To a man, more than 700 students in the College Hostel refused to take their meals in the Hostel messes so long as that student was not admitted on equal terms as a member of the Hostel mess. The cooks would not give in. The students were told that if they persisted in their demands they might have to go without adequate and convenient mess-arrangements for days together. Not one of them put his convenience above that sense of social equality which the Dayanand College and the Arya Samaj had produced in them. Orthodoxy had to yield.

Even in distant Malabar, the very heart of hidebound orthodoxy, his workers challenged the foundations of the local caste-system. The converts from the depressed classes to the Arya Samaj there demanded the right to walk shoulder to shoulder with the Brahmans. Orthodoxy stood aghast. How dare they pollute the atmosphere which the Brahmans had so carefully kept pure for centuries ? But the Aryan Missionaries sent by Mahatma Hansraj to Malabar defied all the dictates of common sense and fought the issue in the law-courts. It was decided that they had as good a right to the use of public roads as the Brahmans. Orthodoxy was still not beaten. It persuaded the local officers to issue orders banning

the use of public roads by these converts during the days of the *Rathayatra* festival. Orthodoxy was now fighting in its last ditch. In 1927 during the *Rathayatra* festival, these converts succeeded at last in asserting their right to use the public roads which had been closed to them and their forefathers for several centuries past.

The worst aspect of the caste-system lies in its denial of the dignity of labour. A blacksmith was not supposed to look beyond his hereditary profession for the means of livelihood. In the Punjab, however, if he received education, he could easily compete with others for entrance into various public offices. Neither orthodoxy nor custom could successfully cheat him of the rewards of his labour. The "higher classes", however, found themselves very often tied to their own professions. This involved several limitations on their right of admission into certain professions. Here, Mahatma Hansraj dealt orthodoxy a deadly blow. Lala Gurdas Ram Chaddha, son of the Mahatma's brother-in-law, had spent some years in his family at Lahore. When he finished his usual education and came of age, the question of his entering a profession came up for decision. Mahatma Hansraj made a rather revolutionary suggestion. Why not let him start a laundry on modern lines? His relatives stood aghast. The washermen were then considered an unclean caste and in some parts of the Punjab were regarded as untouchables. What a profession for a Khatri, they scoffed; it would turn him into an untouchable. But Mahatma Hansraj persisted, and the Chaddha Laundry Works was founded in 1903. The charm was broken. No profession was unclean if one earned one's living honestly.

This was followed by another still more startling incident. Mahatma Hansraj's cousin, Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla, was looking out for a job. One after another various suggestions were made only

to be rejected. The young man would not be satisfied with anything trivial. When all possible openings had been discussed over and over again, Mahatma Hansraj suggested that he should enter business. What business, they asked ? The answer startled the inquirers. Why not sell shoes ? The young man and his relatives thought he was not serious. A Bhalla to sell shoes every day of his life ! Mahatma Hansraj, however, had convincing arguments for supporting his proposal. He reminded them of the story of a rich Chamar of Bajwara whose riches earned him the *Ram Ram* (respectful salutations) of every passer by. To every salutation the Chamar would humorously reply, "I will pass it on." One day some one asked him what he meant by this reply. He answered good humouredly, "I know they would not address me in that way but for my money. I am simply telling them that I will pass on their greetings to the proper quarter, *i.e.*, my money." If a rich Chamar could earn respect in an orthodox village, why should a Bhalla, who set out to acquire wealth by doing what had so far been considered only a Chamar's job, be considered any the less respectable ? Again he won. The result was the "Hindus' Own Shoes Shop" with Lala Dhani Ram presiding over its destinies.

These two incidents opened new chapters in the social history of the Punjab. The Hindus began to explore all avenues of earning a livelihood. Later when the Dayanand Non-University School was finally converted into the Dayanand Industrial School, he persuaded Bakhshi Ram Das Chhibbar to give a princely donation of Rs. 31,000 for scholarships in that institution. The conditions of award demand literacy of a high standard, and the amount of the scholarships is regulated by the attainments of applicants in liberal education. Open to educated young men of all castes and creeds, they have become the cause of attracting many educated

young men belonging to the so called higher castes to vocational education.

He made an unceasing war on the pernicious custom of child marriage. The Dayanand High School delivered its first declaration of war on child marriage by deciding that no one should be allowed to live in the School Hostel who married while in residence there. This was followed by the refusal to admit married boys to the Dayanand High School. Finally their admission was stopped in the Intermediate classes of the College as well.

He was an ardent champion of widow remarriage and helped the late Sir Ganga Ram greatly in his crusade on behalf of unfortunate Hindu widows. In the course of the work organised in connection with various relief schemes he always gave directions that preference should be given to widows. He was partly responsible for the legislation permitting widow remarriages among the higher castes in Nabha State. The Raja invited him to his State so that he might prove to the orthodox that such marriages were permitted by Hindu law. As explained elsewhere, he was eminently successful in his task.

It was thus in the fitness of things that when the National Social Conference held its Session at Amritsar in December, 1919, he should be asked to preside over it. His presidential address, dealt with the various problems confronting Hindu Society at that time.

He took as his subject "Social Reforms necessary for the Hindus" and said:—

"I do not think that modern Hindu Society deserves much praise for its organization. Our social system has now much degenerated and it is impossible for us to revive and maintain our ancient glory without removing the looseness that has crept into some of the joints of our system.

At present we dare not defend either our ancient traditions or the glory that was once ours. These defects have been produced by our running away from our ancient ideals on the one hand and by our failing to read the signs of the times on the other."

He then took up the question of the crying evils in our social system and proceeded :—

'"Our first failing is our poverty. It is strange that living in the lap of such a rich and fertile mother as India we are woefully poor. A friend of mine told me that, on landing in India he felt as if he had entered an Orphanage! That was true. When we compare ourselves with other countries of the world, the comparison is far from flattering; we are nowhere in the scale. The first thing therefore, that needs be done is that a determined attempt should be made in order to root out this shocking poverty from our midst. This can be done in various ways. Every man can take his part in this crusade against poverty by ensuring that every pie that he spends tends to the maintenance of his own countrymen. Swadeshism would ensure it to some extent. We should also insist that no money should be uselessly squandered at the time of our festivals and ceremonies.

'"The second cause of our weakness is the absence of *Brahmacharya* among our people. Child marriage is still prevalent and statistics show that some girls and boys are married when under five years of age. Forty years back Dayanand raised his voice to protest against this ugly feature of our social system and thanks to his efforts, child marriages have become rare.

'"Along with the two above-mentioned causes of our social degeneration, two more evils are eating into our social system. Caste restrictions, as they exist at present, constitute a great hindrance in our path. People differ in their actions and habits and these differences are sure to be reflected in their

social status causing a division of the society on that basis. But among us Hindus, distinction of *Varnas* has been transformed into caste-restrictions. The whole Hindu society seems to be cut up into so many unconnected parts of a magnificent building. Imagine different parts of the human body tied together. When you stop the circulation of blood in such a body, you would find a parallel to our present condition........These distinctions are proving harmful to us in three ways. They ordain, first of all, that members of different castes shall not dine together. When carried to extremes this restriction sometimes keeps members of a family as much apart as if they were followers of different religions. Then caste restrictions are responsible for the fact that Hindus have given up certain lucrative professions, as they have been condemned on grounds of caste. These restrictions again prove harmful to the Hindus in marriage. The marriage circle is limited with the result, that it is very difficult to come across desirable matches for our young men and girls. On account of marriages within a narrow circle our blood is degenerating and the new generation that is rising up is decidedly weaker than its parents.

' "The problem of the depressed classes is also proving a great enigma. One-third of the Hindu population has been condemned unheard to lead the life of serfs. As long as they are within the fold of Hinduism they can neither intermingle with us nor can they draw water from the same wells.

' "Our second weakness centres round the problem of our widows. Thousands of them are cursing the society which condemns them to a life of self-immolation..........It would be highly desirable if society could allow them to remarry. This would have a two-fold advantage. On the one hand the widows shall not have to give up their religion for bettering their lot; on the other

hand, such of our young men as embrace other religions for matrimonial reasons shall be saved to us.

'Speaking on women's education, he emphasized that the spheres of work of men and women were different. "Necessarily this difference demands a difference in the scheme of studies. Women exist to make a heaven of this earth, and if the education they receive does not help them to make a heaven of their homes, it stands self condemned. Fortunately, we have not to face the same difficulties here as confront us in the case of boys. We can try independent experiments here and can evolve our own women's universities."

'In conclusion, he reiterated his conviction that the work of social reform comprised a very important part of our work for national regeneration; and he held that, if well accomplished, we could make a heaven of this earth.'

'In February, 1923, he drew up the following programme for the regeneration of the Hindus.

1. To make the idea of a man's worth, work and habits the fundamental principle of the caste system in order to strengthen the distinctive attributes of the different castes.

2. To remove the false distinctions of castes, and to break through those harmful barriers which are keeping the sub-castes apart in a *Varna*.

3. To make arrangements for the uplift of the depressed classes by helping them with money, religious instruction and education.

4. To introduce a unifying spirit into the various sects of the Hindus which would make them realize that, though distinct, they are members of one religion; and to make them look upon one another with kindlier feelings.

5. To bring the *Vedas* before the Hindus so as to enforce their study and make their truths a part of our daily life.

6. To reorganize our festivals so as to make them help us in the presentation of different aspects of Hindu life.

7. To introduce the habit of congregational prayers among the Hindus.

8. To put an end to the daily drain from among the Hindus, and to see that the thousands of orphans, widows, and members of the depressed classes, of passion-ridden, oppressed, superstitious and ignorant Hindus, do not join the fold of Islam or Christianity. This drain deserves far greater attention than the reputed drain of wealth from India.

9. To make the Hindus realize that their duty is not to limit the circle of their co-religionists, but to propagate the truths of their religion throughout the world and to welcome everybody into their fold.'

CHAPTER XIII

Mahatma Hansraj and the Dayanand College

Mahatma Hansraj retired from the Principalship of the College early in 1912 when he became the President of the Managing Committee and filled this office till December, 1918, when he resigned, after once again assuring himself that his continuance was no longer necessary. But he remained a member of most of the important Sub-Committees and his advice was always sought for on all outstanding questions of policy. He was careful never to obtrude himself on those in charge, particularly his immediate successors in various offices; but knowing the value of his opinion they very often consulted him in advance on questions likely to come up before the various bodies. For the same reason, he made it a point never to attend a meeting of a Committee unless he was specially invited. Two of his immediate successors in particular, Lala Durga Das and Bakhshi Tek Chand, made a habit of calling at his place and taking him with them to the meetings whenever they thought his presence was necessary. In moments of crisis his advice was always sought for and was very often decisive.

In April, 1919, came the first serious strain on the discipline of the College, first in common with the rest of India, and then as a problem peculiar to the Punjab. In March of that year two bills commonly known as the Rowlatt Bills, were passed into law by the Supreme Legislative Council despite the almost unanimous opposition of the elected Indian members.

On March 18, 1919, Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated the civil disobedience movement with a fast and

fixed the 6th of April, 1919, as a day of *hartal*, fasting, prayers and meetings all over India. The demonstrations on that day were held on a countrywide scale, and in certain places led to disturbances. In Amritsar and Lahore martial law was formally proclaimed on April 15, 1919.

During these days, a certain number of students from all the Lahore Colleges observed *hartal* on April 11 and 12 and took part in the public demonstrations that were held.

When the military authorities took over charge of the administration, they picked out College students for punishment. On April 16, they published an order in the Lahore *Civil and Military Gazette* requiring the students of the Dayanand College to present themselves at the Bradlaugh Hall four times a day for roll-call, accompanied by the Principal or a Professor to be selected by him and approved by the Officer Commanding the Lahore (Civil) Area. The order was complied with. No one knew what this marching to and from might involve but under the guidance of the Principal and the senior members of the staff, an attempt was made to give the military authorities in occupation of Lahore no excuse for further interference. The students responded to the call of the Principal as one man. Parties of students were arranged who kept all night vigils in the Hostel.

The roll-call was not a very exhilarating experience. Two soldiers were stationed opposite the students with a machine gun turned on them. Other soldiers on the roofs of the Veterinary College nearby occupied similar positions. As soon as the students arrived, it was signalled to the military headquarters in the Fort. A large number of soldiers was drawn up in front. It was difficult to understand what all these things were supposed to accomplish, except to strike terror in the hearts of the students. But the soldiers on duty were usually friendly and the place

of the roll-call—unlike that for the King Edward Medical College, where the students had to trudge 12 miles a day—was not more than two furlongs from the College. The students behaved admirably.

Towards the end of April, the Officer Commanding called a meeting of the Principals of the local Colleges and required them to punish those students who had taken any part in the disturbances. His suggestion was that at least 10 per cent of the students on the rolls be punished.

On April 29, the Principals received a memorandum from the Officer Commanding, informing them that thenceforth there shall be only two roll-calls a day on the understanding that thePrincipals would "submit to the Officer Commanding the Lahore civil area, by the 7th May, a satisfactory report of the disciplinary action they have taken against the students of their colleges who have taken a leading part in the recent seditious agitations."

The circumstances precluded any investigation, but in compliance with this order a report was submitted to the Officer Commanding on May 7,1919, giving details of the punishments. But these punishments were not considered adequate and a reply containing the following threat was received by the Principal from the military authorities:

"The Officer Commanding Lahore (Civil) Area has carefully considered your letter of the 7th instant. In reply I am directed to say that Col. Johnson considers the disciplinary action suggested therein as entirely inadequate.................. And I am to say that unless he receives from you today a schedule of punishments which in his opinion are more adequately applicable to the unenviable reputation of your College, the Officer Commanding would have no alternative but to immediately close the D.A.-V. College and exclude all its students from the forthcoming examinations." In order to

assist the Principal in framing punishments, a schedule of punishments awarded in the Government and Dayal Singh Colleges was sent for his information. Accordingly, the Principal had no choice but to prepare a second list of punishments.

As soon as martial law was withdrawn and the panic subsided, Rai Bahadur Lala Durga Das, then President of the Committee, saw the Vice-Chancellor, and the Managing Committee took prompt steps to plead the cause of the students who had been summarily and unjustly punished.

In August 1919, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab authorized a Committee presided over by Mr. H. J. Maynard, Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University, to enquire into the cases of students who, in the opinion of their Principals, had been unjustly or too severely punished. This Committee modified several of the orders, including some issued against students of the Dayanand College.

In December, 1919, as a result of the amnesty granted to all political offenders, the Lieutenant Governor authorized the Principals of all the colleges to remit the penalties inflicted upon students during the period of the martial law in so far as it was then feasible. The Managing Committee had just been waiting for just such an opportunity. It decided that fines amounting to Rs. 2170 levied from students during the martial law days be refunded to them.

These were days of trial. At one time it even seemed as though the banning of public meetings at Lahore might make it impossible to hold the weekly meetings of the Arya Samaj. When this contingency was being considered Mahatma Hansraj declared that whatever the orders of the military authorities, he would hold the weekly congregation in the Arya Samaj Mandir, even if he had to do it alone! Despite rumours to the

contrary, the military authorities were wise enough not to go to such lengths and left the Arya Samaj in peace.

As ever, Mahatma Hansraj put the interests of the institution before everything else. To punish one's own students is never pleasant, and it is still less so when one is of opinion that they are guilty of nothing worse than indiscretion in a moment of national excitement. When the Officer Commanding directed the Principal of the Dayanand College to punish his students adequately, the Principal had to decide, in consultation with the Office-Bearers, and members of the College Sub-Committee, what to do in the matter. It was a serious problem. On the one hand they risked becoming a party to punish their own students unjustly, on the other they were faced with the grim prospect that, unless they did so, the College might be closed and all its students who were taking their University examinations that year prevented from appearing. Naturally when issues were so delicately balanced, there were bound to be sharp differences of opinion among the members. Mahatma Hansraj had retired from the presidentship of the Managing Committee in the preceding January. His was, however, mainly the voice that decided what had to be done in the matter. His wise direction of affairs led to the happy result that ultimately most of those who were formally punished in the beginning for no fault of their own escaped any actual penalty.

The heat engendered by the events of the martial law period had hardly subsided before another severe strain was placed on the college by the inauguration of the Non-co-operation Movement in 1921. A special session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta on September 9,1920, under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. It was an irony of fate that one opposed to educational non-co-operation should have been called upon to preside over

the meeting which decided to launch a general campaign of non-co-operation including the boycott of educational institutions. The Congress recommended among other things, "the gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government." In pursuance of this resolution, Mahatma Gandhi visited the Punjab and addressed the students. A general meeting of the students decided to go on strike. Late at night, notices were posted in the Dayanand College Hostel informing the students that Mahatma Hansraj would address them in the Hostel next morning on the subject. They came as sceptics—most of them bent upon absenting themselves from the College and attending a meeting which had been announced to take place in the Municipal Gardens just in front of the Hostel. But as Mahatma Hansraj warmed up, his oration carried the day and the threatened strike never materialized.

In the beginning of 1921, Lala Lajpat Rai, now converted against his better judgment to a programme of non-co-operation including boycott of educational institutions, called upon the students to give up their studies for at least a year and enlist as national workers. In the *Bande Matram* of January 18, 1921, of which he was then Editor, he explained that if the students gave up their studies at the call of the Congress, Government would take it as a strong proof of the desire of the people in this country to gain independence, for which they were willing to sacrifice even the careers of their sons. He knew that the success of his appeal depended upon the attitude the students of the Dayanand College took in the matter. To carry them off their feet, he addressed the following Open Letter to Mahatma Hansraj, unfortunately at a time when he was absent from Lahore.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"*Namaste.* You know very well what deep love

and devotion I have for you. You know what help I rendered in establishing the institution, in making it self-supporting and in saving it from the attacks of its opponents. May I recall to your memory the words which you and the late Lala Lal Chand used with regard to me in the course of a conversation in 1893 when the College happened to be passing through troublesome times and I was almost on death-bed—words that were reported to me on my recovery. From that time up to 1907, and later on again up to 1910, I devoted a major portion of my time to the service of the D.A.-V. College. Under these circumstances it will not be improper for me to say that I too have a right to put forward some scheme for the future of the Dayanand College.

"You cannot have forgotten that it was the express wish of the founders of the institution to keep it free from Government interference and to convert it into a Dayanand University independent of the official University. I do not want to remind you of the struggle which went on between the Punjab Education Department and ourselves, nor of the means we adopted to avoid Government interference despite the efforts of the Education Department to bring us under its control. At last the Government succeeded. Whatever little freedom this movement *i.e.*, the School and the College, had enjoyed during the presidentship of the late Lala Lal Chand and Lala Dwarka Das disappeared*, and now there is no perceptible difference between the D.A.-V. School and the Central Model School. Similarly, the policy of the College is now influenced and controlled by the University. The School and College curricula even now contain books which are full of obviously

* It is difficult to understand what Lala Lajpat Rai had in mind. Lala Lal Chand was President of the Dayanand College Committee till 1912; until 1914 Lala Lajpat Rai's intimate connections with the Dayanand College continued. When did the change come? What did it imply?

false statements, some of them derogatory to our civilization and national honour. Though the Dayanand College, during the last thirty years of its existence, has helped greatly in the spread of education in the Punjab, it is doubtful whether the results of this education have proved useful to any great extent in our struggle for political liberty. I think we have largely abandoned our principles in order to gain the goodwill of the Government and the University, thereby defeating the very mission of Swami ji. Our province is extremely grateful to you for your matchless sacrifice. I feel no hesitation in saying that never in your life have you cared to flatter or curry favour with the officials, nor have you ever tried to win honours and titles for yourself. But this too is an undisputed fact that after 1907* you altered the policy of the Samaj and the College for the sake of others so much so that its ill-effects are now visible to every one. Whatever you did was done from the best of

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* Once again it is difficult to understand what exactly Lala Lajpat Rai had in mind when he made this statement. He was on the Managing Committee in 1907 and till December 1906 its Vice-President. He continued to be a member not only of the College Managing Committee but of all its important Sub-Cnmmittees even while he was in Burma. His friend, Lala Dwarka Das, whom he eulogises rightly for his spirit of independence was elected President of the College Managing Committee in January, 1907 and was in office during the period Lala Lajpat Rai seems to have in mind (1907 to 1910). Lala Lajpat Rai's ardent admirer, Bakhshi Tek Chand, was the General Secretary. On his return from Burma Lala Lajpat Rai resumed his attendance at the meetings of the various bodies connected with the College and his word counted almost as much in the counsels of the College as before.

What precisely is Lala Hansraj accused of doing in 1907 ? It is necessary to remember that he was Principal of the College while Lala Dwarka Das was President of the Managing Committee. Whatever his hold on the College or the Arya Samaj, he was certainly not in a position to do anything to change the policy of the College in opposition to the President. Lala Lajpat Rai's memory seems to have become a little hazy with the passage of time. Neither the records of the period nor the contemporary evidence of those who had to do most with the College in those days can suggest anything that could even faintly indicate any change in the attitude of the College as such towards either the University or the Government.

Much is made sometimes of the attempt that the Arya Samajists made in 1907 after Lala Lajpat Rai's deportation to clear the Arya Samaj *as such* of the charge of being a seditious, or even a political body. This

motives and for the good of the College and the Samaj. But the result was quite the opposite—the Samaj and the College did not remain true to their ideals nor was the Government pleased. You have been loser both ways, and fallen between two stools.

"Now for some years past a new spirit has come over the country. The principles proclaimed by Swami Dayanand and stamped upon the minds of the youth of the day by the first leaders of the Arya Samaj movement are now universally popular. Long before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi the Arya Samajists had learnt the ideals of Swadeshi and Non-co-operation from Swami ji. I know I don't do you any wrong when I say that for years you have yourself preached these same ideals. I

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was an act of pure self-defence, which a religious body was certainly entitled to resort to, particularly in the Punjab governed as it was then mainly by members of the British Army who were little used to weighing evidence judicially.

It did not imply any disloyalty to the Arya Samajists who were doing political work. So little was there any intention of casting any slur on them that the proceedings of the Managing Committee, as well as the articles and notes in the organ of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, the *Arya Gazette*, contain frequent laudatory references to Lala Lajpat Rai who had then been deported on account of such work.

A letter published in the *Civil & Military Gazette*, which, as reflecting the contemporary official viewpoint was then loud in its denunciations of the Arya Samaj, is sometimes dragged in to imply that those connected with the Dayanand College wanted to dissociate themselves from Lala Lajpat Rai in his hour of trial in 1907. The letter was written by a member of the College staff. All that it said was that it was unjust to hold the Arya Samaj *as such* guilty of being a seditious body for the alleged activities of some of its members. It further declared that, just before his deportation, and for sometime before as well, Lala Lajpat Rai had been devoting more of his time to political work than to the Arya Samajic work or work connected with the Dayanand College. Naturally, without entering into the question of the guilt or otherwise of Lala Lajpat Rai—and it would have been impossible to get a letter published in the *Civil* which tried to establish the innocence of Lala Lajpat Rai—it implied that to declare the Arya Samaj either political or seditious on his account was not just. Written by a Professor it was an admirable piece of cold logic trying to establish the fact that the Arya Samaj should not be held answerable for all the acts of its members, unless they were done to further the work of the Arya Samaj.

On his return from Mandalay this letter was brought to the notice of Lala Lajpat Rai, who is said to have declared that under similar circumstances he would have written in the same strain.

am sure that even now you have faith in these ideals. Under these circumstances, may I appeal to you, either to announce publicly that you have changed your ideals or in conformity with those principles and in obedience to the demand of the people,to free the Dayanand College from University control and convert it into an independent Dayanand University. This is a golden opportunity for you as well as for the College and you ought to avail yourself of it. If you are afraid that on account of a fall in income from fees, you will have to reduce the staff, I am prepared to give you the following guarantee :—

"(*a*) I will make good the loss in income from fees in the next year as compared with the average income from the same source during the last two years.

"(*b*) You need not dispense with the services of even a single member of your staff; you may give them an opportunity of utilizing their spare time in study and research if the number of students happens to fall. I am more than certain that in two years' time the position of your national University will become strong and unassailable.

"(*c*) Within, one week from the date on which your Managing Committee passes a resolution of severing connection with the University, I will deposit in your account with the bank a sum of Rs. 50,000 to meet any deficit in your budget for a period of approximately two years, so that you may not have to depend simply on my bare words. If this amount proves insufficient to meet the deficit during the next two years, I will collect the remaining sum also very soon. You and your colleagues need not worry about any fall in income. I request you to kindly place this proposal of mine before the Managing Committee and to inform me of their decision within two weeks from now so that

I may be able to decide my attitude towards the Dayanand College once for all.

Lajpat Rai."

In reply Mahatma Hansraj sent the following letter which was not published however till Lala Lajpat Rai's rejoinder thereto was ready.

"My very dear Brother,

"*Nameste.* On my return from Ambala, last Saturday, I came to know that you had addressed an Open Letter to me. I asked myself, 'Where was the necessity for you to address me through a newspaper, when my house is so near to your own, and when every time you expressed a desire to meet me, I have seen you at your place ?'

"On Sunday I read the article in question. At first I thought I might see you and discuss the whole thing with you personally. But I was afraid lest this course of action on my part might mislead the public into thinking that I had not cared to reply to your letter. So very much against my own wishes, I have been forced to address this public reply to you.

"Another thought, too, struck me. In writing this letter you did not take into consideration my position with regard to the Dayanand College during the last ten years. Though the students of the Dayanand College are dearer to me than even my own children, yet when I resigned the Principalship of the College, I decided not to interfere in the College affairs, specially where students were concerned, without the express wish and desire of Principal Sain Das. He knows that I have stuck to my resolve. When I resigned the presidentship of the Managing Committee, I decided not to take part in the work of the Managing Committee or of the School and College Sub-Committee, unless expressly invited by Lala Durga Das, or Bakhshi

Tek Chand for consultation or for completing the quorum. I have not swerved from this determination either. At the bottom of this vow, is my firm conviction that younger men cannot fulfil their obligations properly unless their elders allow them full freedom of action, even at some cost.

"Perhaps you were unaware of this decision of mine, otherwise you would not have taken the trouble of addressing this Open Letter to me. But under the circumstances explained above I am not prepared to undertake the responsibility of communicating to you the reply of the Managing Committee within a fortnight.

"I duly recognize your right to guide and advise the College Committee on account of your services to the institution. I fully appreciate that these services have been of a very high order and, if I mistake not, I respect and honour you more than you yourself do.

"But I don't regard you or myself as the founder of the Dayanand College. The founder of it is the Arya Samaj and that spirit with which the Samaj is actuated. The College is not the result of the efforts of any particular individual, but of the corporate energy of the Arya Samaj.

"The idea of establishing a College was put forward before the Arya Samajists by the late Lala Sain Das and late Lala Lal Chand in 1884 when both of us were yet students. They drafted its rules and regulations before June, 1886, when neither you nor I was able to render much help in that direction. The objects of the College as laid down in the draft scheme were the fruit of their labours. You know very well what those aims are; to popularise Hindi and the study of Classical Sanskrit, to propagate a knowledge of Science and English literature side by side with the spread of technical education. When appointed Headmaster of the Dayanand School in 1886, I was put in charge of ten classes and told to

prepare the students of the 10th class for the Entrance Examination of the Punjab University which was to be held in March next. At that time, neither of us two was a member of the College Managing Committee. It was in March, 1887 that you became a member of the Managing Committee while I acquired this honour in February, 1889. But before all this, the School had been affiliated to the Punjab University. All this had occurred during the life time of Lala Lal Chand and Lala Sain Das. At that time your voice, as well as mine, was so weak that we could not hope to influence the decision of the Managing Committee. As long as you remained connected with the College, you did everything to encourage University education and expressed your pleasure and pride at the good results shown by the School and College Departments. The same was the case with me. It is true that Lord Curzon's policy changed the attitude of the Government towards private institutions. The Government then began to look askance at them. It tried to impose greater and still greater restrictions on us. The Dayanand College Committee has been facing this situation very courageously up till now and no change in the policy of the College has taken place so far. We have always believed that education, as imparted in the D.A.-V. College, is useful for our national and religious regeneration, in spite of all the difficulties and restrictions that we have to undergo in our work.

"Nobody before has ever dared to suggest that the present University education should be given up and the Dayanand College should be converted into an independent National University. For the first time you have made this proposal in your Open Letter. For consideration of this proposal you have allowed the Committee a period of fifteen days, which I think is obviously insufficient.

"So far as I have been able to understand you, I can see two ideals underlying your proposal—

political and educational. Politically, you wish that all educational institutions should be closed for one year and the students should devote themselves to political activities. If this plan be adopted, we need not worry about the educational problem for at least one year. If after a year the British Government grants India full responsible Government, you will most probably regard Government aid and Government control as good things instead of bad, and the educational problem will be solved automatically.

"That all students should give up their studies and take up political work in order that the country might march towards this goal is a question which requires careful thought on the part of the students and their parents. The political leaders of the country also must consider whether political work can be done efficiently by raw youths of eighteen or twenty. I do not want to offer any opinion on this question.

"If political considerations are ignored and the whole problem is studied from the educational standpoint, we must stop to consider whether modern education is absolutely harmful, or partially so. I know that modern education is not without its defects. But considering everything, I feel it is more useful than harmful. Hence to abandon this system of education for the sole reason that it is controlled by the University or that it is not free from defects, will not be of any service to the country. It is our duty to put pressure upon the Government and the University to make this education as useful as we can. We shall try to have independent institutions also, so that we may be able to show that we can wholly, or to some extent at least, remove those defects which are found in the present University education. For this reason I am in favour of independent institutions and Universities. I think that it would be a very auspicious day in

the history of the Dayanand College when it is converted into a University. For the realization of this object two courses are open to us.

" The first course is to request the Government to allow us to have an Aryan University just as they have promised to raise the Khalsa College to the status of a University or just as they have given a charter to the Benares University and enabled it to become a first rate educational institution. This will put an end to our educational difficulties and the graduates turned out by our University will not have to go without Government service or be debarred from such professions as are under the control of the Government. Of course our University cannot be a completely independent University but it is bound to be a very great improvement on the present state of affairs. To achieve this end the Arya Samajes should approach the Government and be ready to collect thousands of rupees.

" The present educational policy of the Government lends colour to my view that this will not be a hopeless task and that the Arya Samajists will not fail in achieving their object. But success in this direction will be impossible unless all the Arya Samajists put forward this demand unitedly and emphatically.

" The second course is the one suggested by you. The D.A.-V. College Managing Committee, you suggest, should sever all connections with the University and declare that the Dayanand College will be an independent University hence forward. This course, however, is open to several objections. Those who bear heavy expenditure on the education of their children will not like to educate them in a College, education wherein does not enable them to earn a decent livelihood. Further for the foundation of a first grade University a sum of at least Rs. 1,00,00,000 is required. The Medical, Engin-

eering, Commercial, Industrial, Technological and Science Faculties will have to be opened. I don't see any hope of the Arya Samajists being able to raise the requisite amount easily. You have very kindly promised to provide Rs. 50,000 for two years for which I feel deeply grateful to you. But I submit that this is too small a sum for such a huge task, unless it be proposed to organize this independent University on different lines after two years.

"You all know that the Dayanand College and the various schools attached to it teach Hindi, Sanskrit and rudiments of the Vedic religion to thousands of students. If we close down all these institutions and start a new one, we shall have a very limited number of boys. This will hit hard the missionary work of the Samaj, and whatever influence and prestige the Arya Samaj enjoys in the Punjab will lessen considerably.

"Taking all these things into consideration, I feel that the policy proposed by the Dayanand College Managing Committee is very wise. The present School and College should not be disaffiliated so that this field for Arya Samajic propaganda be not stopped. Efforts should also be made to prepare a scheme for an independent school. The parents of our students should be asked to let us know whether they would like their children to be educated on those lines. If a sufficient number of parents express their willingness, an independent school will be set up for this purpose. The College Committee has set up a Sub-Committee which is doing its work steadily. You can set apart your Rs. 50,000 for this High School.

"The College Committee has also decided that if one hundred students of the College Department apply to the Principal, with the consent and permission of their parents, to make arrangements for Non-University Collegiate education, the Committee will make such arrangements for their education.

There has been no delay or hesitation on the part of the Committee, but there has been no such demand on the part of the students so far. If you succeed in inducing one hundred boys to apply to the Principal, with the previous consent of their parents, for admission to an independent College, I am prepared to take upon myself the duty of making all arrangements for their education. I need not further remind you that the Dayanand College does not consist only of the School and the College departments; but comprises an Ayurvedic Vidyalaya and a Vedic Vidyalaya. The Ayurvedic College is an independent institution so far as its curriculum and examinations are concerned. The Vedic College, which is a semi-independent institution, can be very easily converted into a completely independent one. There is nothing but financial stringency in the way of raising these two Colleges to first rate institutions. An independent Commercial College will be started very shortly; and to provide further facilities for industrial education the Committee has raised special funds this year. Something will be done in this direction in the near future.

" The greatest obstacle in the way of our freedom, whether individual or national is that we go on multiplying our wants. This multiplication of wants, whether voluntary or due to outside influence, keeps us in bondage. According to the *Shastras*, it is a sin for a high caste Brahman to accept food even from his Raja; the true Sanyasi was absolutely indifferent towards worldly comforts.

" These two classes in the society were regarded as the most independent part thereof. Their life was one of austerity and self-denial. Unless the leaders of our country impress upon the minds of the people the desirability of leading a life of plain living and high thinking, they cannot win for them and their children any freedom whatever. If this

lesson is driven home to the people, they may begin to disregard wealth and send their sons to independent national institutions for education. Then there will be no need for inducing any one to join such institutions. But so long as people run after the good things of life and their love for worldly comforts is on the increase, it is difficult to expect them to listen to us.

"The best thing, in my opinion, for you would be to appeal to the parents not to place before their children the ideals of wealth and worldliness. If you succeed, however little, in your efforts, not only one but many independent Universities will spring up. But most respectfully I submit that if, under the present circumstances, the Dayanand College severs its connection from the University, the result would be that those students, who are now receiving their education in this College, would go to the Government, Mission, or Islamia Colleges, or would give up their studies altogether, and would be deprived of the benefit of the religious instruction which the Samaj imparts. The same result would follow if the Arya Samaj Schools were closed. Whatever useful work the Samaj has been able to do during the last thirty-four years would be undone. Your voice will not reach the ears of students of the Government Colleges. The boys of the Mission Colleges, too, will not listen to you. Those of the Khalsa and Islamia Colleges too, will be indifferent. The most deeply influenced will be the Dayanand College students. It will be a matter for deep regret if the institution, which you had helped so much to build up, should now suffer at your hands. It will be much better if you help the Committee in their efforts towards the establishment of an independent institution. If you consider those efforts insufficient and unsatisfactory, make others join hands with you, appeal for funds, and set up another independent national institution.

"If you establish a separate independent national college, I am ready to help you and co-operate with you. If you succeed in your efforts, you will not only be founding one independent institution but introducing and popularising independent education. As a result of the foundation of the Dayanand School and College many other schools and colleges have sprung up in the Punjab. Similarly, the establishment of one independent institution will be followed by the establishment of many more independent schools and colleges. It is for you to decide whether you will keep all your energies concentrated on political work or will take in hand an educational programme also. I cannot undertake any educational work unaided and alone, for I regard it as my first duty to train men for the service of the Arya Samaj.

Hansraj."

Lala Lajpat Rai's appeal for educational non-co-operation was bound to have some effect and on January 22, 1921, Principal Sain Das received an application signed by 439 students of the College asking for permission to invite Lala Lajpat Rai to address them on the question of educational non-co-operation. But public meetings at Lahore had been banned by the Government of the Punjab. A meeting to be addressed by Lala Lajpat Rai could not remain confined to the students of the Dayanand College and it was felt that in case outsiders attended it, the police might consider it to be a public meeting and take action against the lecturer as well as the conveners. It was, therefore, decided by the local members of the Managing Committee not to allow the students to run this risk or subject Lala Lajpat Rai to the indignity of an arrest in the College. The whole question was carefully examined by the Managing Committee. Under the lead of Lala Hansraj they refused to close the College, but de-

clared that they were prepared to open Non-University College Classes as soon as 50 applications were received for admission in any one class or 150 for all the classes, provided the applicants stated in writing that they were joining these classes with the consent of their parents.

Keeping in view the constitution of the Managing Committee it can be safely asserted that this decision reflected the genuine opinion of the educated Punjab on the question. The Committee was not prepared to undo its own work and close its old departments; but it was certainly willing to try new experiments to meet any genuine need. The hold which Mahatma Hansraj had over people contributed not a little to the successful stand the College was able to take.

The free, frank, and fearless exposition of the College policy by Mahtama Hansraj to the students of the College saved it during a crisis which seriously threatened its very life. Mahatma Hansraj never minced matters, and though he did not dabble in politics, he was never afraid of speaking out or courting unpopularity in the national interest as he saw it.

While the agitation for the disaffiliation of the College was at its height, Mahatma Hansraj became the target of criticism from many quarters. Thanks to his far-sighted policy, the Dayanand College Committee refused to imperil the educational careers of hundreds of young men entrusted to its care. He was openly reviled for the bold stand which he took in the matter. His critics seemed to think that he was the only obstacle in the way of the success of educational non-co-operation in the Punjab. They were probably right to this extent, that if some of these critics had had their way thousands of young men would have found themselves wandering aimlessly in the streets after leaving their institutions. That they were saved from this dire plight

was certainly due largely to Mahatma Hansraj, who courageously refused to make the educational system of the country the hand-maid of the ever-shifting exigencies of politics.

He was, however, always ready to harness public enthusiasm for better ends. Out of this craving for independent education—which he well knew was only momentary—he produced two lasting results; the Dayanand Non-University School and the Mahila Mahavidayalya. The former has now been transformed into the Dayanand Industrial School, while the latter is serving the cause of women's education in all its stages.

The months that followed the decision of this question by the Dayanand College Managing Commitee were a period of great strain for Mahatma Hansraj and his colleagues. To find Lala Lajpat Rai on the other side of the fence in any question seriously concerning the Dayanand College was not a very pleasant experience for any one, least of all for Lala Hansraj. As his *Diary* records :—

" *November* 4, 1921. Ever since Lala Lajpat Rai's return from America I have been daily praying for his welfare."

On the other hand it was not a quarrel of his own seeking. It had been forced upon him. There were some incidents which affected Mahatma Hansraj as few things connected with his own life ever did. His *Diary* for example has this entry for June 10, 1921 :

" Just before the annual meeting of the College Society the *Bande Matram* published an attack on me. Lala Ram Prashad absented himself from the Union Dinner on Saturday.

" Bhagat Madhu Sudhan (Vice-President of the Dayanand College Managing Committee at the time) went to fetch Lala Lajpat Rai, and very nearly

persuaded him to come but Lala Lajpat Rai changed his mind at the last moment."

There is no more pathetic statement in his *Diary* than the following :—

"*November* 24, 1921. Then I thought of Lala Lajpat Rai............Alas! our pleasant relations are at an end."

It was about this time that Mahatma Gandhi launched his movement of non-violent non-co-operation, with the promise that if his programme was followed the country would acquire self government within a year. In the Punjab, as elsewhere, he appealed to the imagination of a very large section of politically-minded people. The Arya Samajists had always been in the front rank of the lovers of their country. Mahatma Gandhi's whirlwind campaign carried many of them off their feet. From all sides came the suggestions that Mahatma Hansraj should now enter the political arena. The *Diary* runs as follows :—

"*December* 4, 1921. Dr. Nihal Chand suggested that it would be better if Hansraj now entered the political field."

"*December* 8. Lala Duni Chand saw me. He thinks that the College and the Arya Samaj should pass resolutions condemning the Government policy."

"*December* 15, 1921. Hari Chand said, 'All of us are waiting for your lead.' I replied, 'I do not know the law. I can't begin a new life at this stage and I am not competent.'"

Lala Lajpat Rai was arrested soon after. This put a severe strain on the Arya Samajists, among them on Mahatma Hansraj. Immediately on learning of the arrest, Mahatma Hansraj applied for

permission to interview Lala Lajpat Rai in Jail. To his extreme regret, he learnt on December 17, that this had been refused.

It was a critical moment in Mahatma Hansraj's life. Pressure was put on him from all sides to swim with the Congress tide, but his cold reason counselled otherwise.

He wrote in his *Diary*.

"*January* 1, 1922. Spent some time in thought. What is to become of Mahatma Gandhi's movement? Are not his followers sacrificing their lives uselessly like moths? Their love for their country compels admiration. But they do not realize that a good deal of unostentatious solid work remains to be done." He thus declined to make the Arya Samaj organization subordinate to the Congress, though this was what even some of those, who ought to have known better, very nearly suggested.

It was about this occasion that a suggestion came from a very responsible Arya Samajist educationist that, in order to placate the Congress, the Dayanand College and the connected institutions should introduce khaddar uniforms for their students and staff. Quick came the reply, "Yes, but this won't placate them, howsoever good it might be in itself. What would we do next if they make further demands on us?" The inquirer stood silenced.

Lala Hansraj was at this time President of the Lahore Arya Samaj. Here again, pressure was put on him from various sides to tie the boat of the Arya Samaj to the Congress ship. As always, he refused to be deflected from his course by a single inch. He resigned the presidency, however, allowing those who differed from him to steer their own course. Once in office they found that they had to depend upon Lala Hansraj and his counsel more than ever. Thus, thanks to Mahatma Hansraj,

the Arya Samaj and the Dayanand College kept themselves confined to their proper work.

Lala Hansraj's successor in the Principalship of the College, Lala Sain Das, began keeping indifferent health in 1929 and found the increasing work of the Institution too much to cope with. Earlier he had asked the Managing Committee to appoint an Assistant to deal with the growing demands of the Institution.

He applied for sick leave towards the end of the year 1929. The failure of the Committee to appoint a Vice-Principal and thus a normal successor to the Principal in his absence now complicated matters. As in 1909, there was a lack of unanimity in the Committee on the subject. Bakhshi Ram Rattan, who, though he was the Headmaster of Dayanand High School at the time, was the senior Life Member in the Institution and was ultimately appointed to officiate for Lala Sain Das.

Bakhshi Ram Rattan officiated as Principal until the return of Lala Sain Das from leave ; the former then resumed his post as Headmaster of the School. Lala Sain Das now suggested that Bakhshi Ram Rattan, though continuing to serve in the School as its Headmaster, should also be appointed the Vice-Principal in the College. This was done.

Towards the end of the year 1930, Lala Sain Das had a talk with Mahatma Hansraj suggesting that he would like to retire early in 1931. Mahatma Hansraj had always felt that one should not continue in such a high position for too long a period. But he did not want to appear to accept Lala Sain Das's suggestion too readily. He, therefore, tried to dissuade him, though, as he records in his *Diary* he was glad to find Lala Sain Das firm in his resolution that he should now definitely retire whatever it might cost him. Accordingly, Lala Sain Das sent in his resignation. The College Sub-Committee

attempted to persuade him to withdraw it without success. It then decided that he should be granted sick leave till the beginning of the summer vacation but be allowed to retire in January, 1931.

There was now the question of his successor. Lala Devi Dayal again preferred his claims to officiate in a leave vacancy, as he put it. But the appointment of Bakhshi Ram Rattan as Vice-Principal involved, if nothing else, the assertion that he would officiate as Principal whenever the Principal was on leave. As the life of the Managing Committee elected in 1927 was drawing to a close, the College Sub-Committee left the question open till the formation of the new Committee and the election of its Office-bearers and the Sub-Committees in January, 1931.

Meanwhile, a good deal of heat had been imported into the question from various sides. Some desired to see Lala Devi Dayal appointed Vice-Principal and to achieve this end did not care who became Principal. Most of the Life Members working in the College resented the obvious slur upon Lala Mehr Chand. The members of the College Sub-Committee tried to devise various expedients for solving this awkward problem. Some suggested that the post be advertised and an outsider appointed Principal. Others desired that Lala Diwan Chand, who had resigned the Life Membership of the Society in 1922 on completing his twenty years and was now Principal of the Dayanand College Cawnpore, be requested to come back to Lahore as Lala Sain Das's successor. But as Mahatma Hansraj recorded in his *Diary*, it was difficult for Lala Diwan Chand to come to Lahore. "In two years he would lose a sum of ten to twelve thousand rupees (if he came on a Life Member's salary). He would get a bad name for himself and lose his position in the Arya Samaj if he returned to Lahore on a higher salary."

All through these difficult days, Mahatma Hansraj was firm in his resolve to secure that only Bakhshi Ram Rattan, the Senior Life Member, should be appointed Principal, and Lala Mehr Chand who ranked next to him Vice-Principal. At his suggestion an attempt was made by Bakhshi Tek Chand to try to reconcile the 'conflicting claims' of Bakhshi Ram Rattan and Lala Mehr Chand. A compromise was arrived at.

Connected with this was another question, who should be the next President of the Dayanand College Managing Committee ? Rai Bahadur Lala Durga Das who held the Office at this time had declined to stand for re-election when the question was first raised in private consultation in December, 1930. It was suggested that for want of a suitable successor to Lala Durga Das, particularly in view of the difficult times through which the College might have to pass, Mahatma Hansraj should be the next President. No definite decision, however, was arrived at and the matter was left open. Mahatma Hansraj soon made up his mind to consent to accept the office if his name was proposed, for, as his *Diary* puts it, " if he refused to be the President, it might involve the College in some difficulties. Lala Devi Dayal wanted to become the Vice-Principal and his supporters were bent on it." Further he wanted to prevent 'injustice' being done to Bakhshi Ram Rattan.

When the new Managing Committee met on January 16, 1931, matters took a surprising turn. Lala Durga Das's name was proposed for the Presidency followed by another proposal that Mahatma Hansraj be elected President. Lala Durga Das thereupon withdrew his name and Mahatma Hansraj was unanimously elected President. Once again, he was in office because he thought it a call of duty. The question of appointing Lala Sain Das's successor was not on the agenda of the

Managing Committee that day, but Mahatma Hansraj who was now in the chair was persuaded against his own judgment to allow it to be taken up. Bakhshi Ram Rattan was, thereupon appointed to officiate for Lala Sain Das during the period of his absence on leave. Later on, Bakhshi Ram Rattan was appointed Principal and Lala Mehr Chand Vice-Principal. Several attempts were made to upset this decision and at one stage Mahatma Hansraj had to use his casting vote in order to safeguard the settlement.

Mahatma Hansraj remained President for a year, during which he was able to do much to smooth the path of the new Principal. It is undoubtedly true that with some one else as President, it would have been difficult either to exercise successfully that control over the new Principal which it seemed desirable to exert, or to keep in check the opposing forces which appeared occasionally to make things difficult for the Principal. Thus a repetition of what had happened in the Deccan Educational Society, Poona, in similar circumstances was prevented.

Early next year, however, he felt that he had done his part of the work. " The influential members of the Committee do not seem to be much inclined to undertake reforms either in the Brahma Mahavidyalaya or the College Boarding House." " Under these conditions ", he wrote in his *Diary*, " I do not think it necessary to give my time to the College ". Another reason influencing him was that he had found in Lala Sain Das a capable successor for the presidency. He, therefore, declined to have his name proposed for re-election and Lala Sain Das was appointed President in his place.

When Mahatma Hansraj was the President of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, he started the practice of calling an annual meeting not only of the members of the Sabha but of the Arya Sama-

jists as a whole. On these occasions conferences were held on various subjects and several questions concerning the Arya Samaj in general and the Sabha in particular were considered. It was at these conferences that the Arya Vidya Sabha was created to act as a central advisory body , particularly in relation to the Schools as instruments for Arya Samajic work. It was there too that the *Pundit Sabha* and the *Updeshik Mandal* were formed, the first to study theological questions, the second to examine various matters regarding the matter and methods of religious propaganda and its organization. An agency was thus established for deliberative work in the Arya Samaj.

When the anniversary of the Sabha was held at Rawalpindi in 1929, the discussions in the *Pundit Sabha* revealed a difference in outlook and approach between the general body of the members and Pundit Vishwa Bandhu, then Principal of Dayanand Brahma Maha Vidyalaya. He seemed, to the majority of the members there, to wish to suggest not an alternative or a supplementary interpretation of certain Vedic hymns as interpreted by Swami Dayanand but the only correct interpretation. As Principal of the institution set up for the purpose of training teachers of the Arya Samaj it seemed to some that the position he adopted was an embarrassing one.

At Easter, 1931, at the suggestion of Mahatma Hansraj, a Workers' Conference was called under the Sabha mainly to consider various questions in connection with expanding the work of the Arya Samaj. Here certain prominent Arya Samajists raised the question of the views held by Pundit Vishwa Bandhu.

The questions raised in this conference could not be easily shelved. Pundit Raja Ram and Pundit Vishwa Bandhu wrote to Mahatma Hansraj suggesting that certain theological questions needed

examination by competent scholars. Some correspondence followed, as a result of which it was agreed upon that the discussions should centre round the question whether there were any historical allusions in the *Vedas*. An agreed list of Arya Samajic scholars was prepared and they were requested to meet at Lahore in May, 1931, in order to examine this question.

Accordingly these scholars met in the Principal's Lodge. This gathering was the most representative and scholarly that had ever met in the history of the Arya Samaj for the discussion of such questions. In fact, it was the first gathering of its kind. Those who attended included Pundit Vishwa Bandhu, M.A., M.O.L., Pundit Charu Deva, M.A., M.O.L., Pundit Raja Ram Shastri, Mahamahopadhyaya, Pundit Arya Muni, Pundit Brahma Datta, Pundit Bhagwad Datt, B.A., Superintendent of the Research Department, Dayanand College, Lahore, Doctor Lakshman Swarup, M.A., D. Phil., Professor of Sanskrit in the University of the Punjab, and Lala Devi Chand, M.A. Eminent *Sanyasis* of the Arya Samaj were also present, including Swami Sarvadanand, Shri Narayan Swami, and Swami Achyutanand. For five days, discussions continued from 7-30 in the morning till 1-30, and from 2-0 to 6-0 p.m. Mahatma Hansraj presided. Thanks to his conduct of the deliberations, the discussions went off smoothly. Of course it was impossible to reach any unanimous conclusion on such a delicate subject.

The following entry in Mahatma Ji's *Diary*, however, sums up the situation admirably.

"*August* 19, 1931. Following the discussions in the Conference, Pundit Raja Ram and Pundit Charu Deva made a declaration that they themselves did not believe that the *Vedas* contain any historical allusions, though they held that the author of the *Nirukta* is of the contrary opinion. Pundit Vishwa Bandhu has also realized that his

position is not easily tenable and that the Arya Samajists would not bend before him. Further the Arya Samajists have now publicly learnt what the views of Pundit Vishwa Bandhu are. This would naturally place some obstacles in his path."

The question, however, could not very well be left in this unsettled condition. Pundit Vishwa Bandhu was principal of the seminary for training Arya Samajic priests and it was naturally expected that as such he should conform to the views generally held by the Arya Samajists in so important a matter as the interpretation of the *Vedas*. The question came to a head when objection was taken against his delivering an address on the occasion of the anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj. The situation was saved only by his wisely declining to deliver the address. The matter was then taken to the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha and the Dayanand College Managing Committee. Both these bodies had long been pressed to go into this question by several Arya Samajists and Arya Samajes. Passions were now roused, canvassing was resorted to. Warm participants in the struggle began to think that another split in the Arya Samaj was imminent.

It is a tribute to the impartiality of Mahatma Hansraj that when the question was brought before the Managing Committee and it seemed that a battle royal would be fought on this issue, both sides consented to leave the matter entirely in his hands. As a result, Pundit Vishwa Bandhu was transferred from the Dayanand Brahma Mahavidyalaya to the Research Department of the Dayanand College in 1934.

Once again Mahatma Hansraj saved the situation by his tact and far-sightedness. He refused to become an instrument of those who seemed to hold that there was no place in the Arya Samaj for an honest difference of opinion on any question of

belief, big or small. On the other hand, he impressed upon those who seemed to be fighting for freedom of thought that there were limits to that freedom and that persons in privileged positions could not take shelter under that formula.

Thus whenever a critical situation arose, Mahatma Hansraj was sure to be called upon to assume the helm of affairs. That the ship of the College and the Arya Samaj was always able to reach a safe haven was very largely due to him.

CHAPTER XIV

Humanitarian Work

Hindus are proverbially generous, and sadhus and beggars receive millions of rupees every year in charity from them. On the banks of the various holy rivers, at great places of pilgrimage, untold wealth is given in charity by Hindus of every grade. Yet of organized charity in Hindu India there was not much sign. Thus when in 1895, crops failed over the larger portion of India, the famine that followed found the Hindus in general unaffected by this call of humanity. The extent of the distress that followed can be imagined from the fact that one Christian missionary estimated the number of deaths in various parts of the country till June, 1897, at 3 millions. The Government organized relief measures in the distressed areas. The only non-official agency then available to help the Government in its humanitarian work was the Christian missionary. The sight of Hindu children passing into the hands of the Christians, presumably to be reared in their faith, attracted the notice of the Arya Samajists in the Punjab. Under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai the Hindu Orphan Relief Movement was started, mostly to take care of Hindu children left without any means of support. The appeals of Lala Lajpat Rai found a ready response in men and money in the Punjab. Several students of the Dayanand College and some members of the Lahore Arya Samaj offered their honorary services for the purpose of rescuing such children from various parts of the country. The work was not as easy as it might appear to-day. The Christian missionaries were already in the field. They were known

to the British administrators of the country. The Government was taking measures on a large scale for the relief of distress. Distressed children could pass into the hands of non-official agencies through the instrumentality of the Government officials alone. Naturally they were prepared to hand them over to the Christian missionaries, about whose capacity to support the children in distress they were sure. The Arya Samajic workers in the Punjab were unknown in the areas in which they were working and had therefore to face many difficulties in getting Hindu children entrusted to them. But they persisted in their efforts, sometimes covering hundreds of miles to save a single child. The result was that 250 children were rescued and brought to the Punjab, where four orphanages were established in order to receive them and bring them up.

The experience gained and success obtained in 1897, were utilized again in 1899, when famine conditions once more appeared in the country. It was decided to revive the movement for the relief of the orphans, this time on a larger scale. Lala Diwan Chand, then a student of the Dayanand College, was deputed to Rajputana. He was to find out in what ways and to what extent the Arya Samaj could help in the relief of distress, particularly the rescue of the Hindu orphans. He was also to find out whether it would be possible to get any local help in the affected areas. He travelled extensively in Rajputana and saw the official camps established for the relief of famine. On his return to Lahore, he was able to give the necessary information, and work for the rescue of Hindu children was at once taken vigorously in hand.

* "In several Native States our agents waited upon high officials, and tried to impress upon them

*This description is taken from the *Arya Samaj* by Lala Lajpat Rai.

their duty towards the orphans and other destitute children of their territories, explaining how necessary it was, in the interests of the States, to keep the children upon their own soil and to protect them in that trying period not only from death by starvation, but also from being carried to distant places for conversion to alien faiths.

"The missionaries were fighting a noble battle, and it was not for us to start an agitation against them in Rajputana; nor had we the means and strength to do so even had we the mind to try. We made no secret of our concern at the conversion of a large number of our co-religionists to an alien faith, and we tried to arouse attention to it here and there; but we soon found that this negative work alone would not suffice, and that it was not likely to bear fruit, even in Native States, much less in British territory. To save even a few hundreds, we must be prepared to bring them to the Punjab, where they were sure to find sufficient food and clothing to keep them going till the end of the famine. So we called upon the Hissar Arya Samaj to organise an orphan relief movement for their own as well as the neighbouring districts. In Rajputana our agents, again and again applied personally to the local officers in-charge of the famine relief camps but met with no success, although we have reason to believe that large numbers of Hindu children were, from time to time, handed over to Christian missionaries and by them sent to distant places in India. In Bombay our agents travelled as far as Surat and Baroda, and tried to arouse the Hindu public to a sense of their duty towards the little ones of their community, who, in their distress, needed their help and sympathy. We have reason to believe that these visits of our agents, and their readiness to take charge of as many children as might be entrusted to them, had their effect; so that we had the

satisfaction of knowing that we had left no stone unturned to prove as useful to Bombay as we could.

" Similarly we carried on a successful campaign in Kathiawar, the Central Provinces, and parts of Bombay and succeeded in rescuing altogether about 1,700 children. For their protection and training we opened several new orphanages in the Punjab, some of which were only temporary shelters. All classes of the Hindu community, without distinction of caste or creed, helped us in this undertaking and the movement proved a blessing in more ways than one.

" The movement at last received recognition from the Government, some children also were handed over to the different orphanages established under its auspices, and some small financial help was given at the end of the famine from the unused balance of the non-official famine fund."

It was during the course of relief work in this famine that the famous Simla case arose. The President of the Simla Arya Samaj, was prosecuted because he had received into his house an orphan girl, Sohagi, who had been brought to Simla along with several other orphans by Christian missionaries and then handed over to Mrs. Tytler—a landlady at Simla. Sohagi had been found weeping in the bazar ill-clad and ill-fed. On Mrs. Tytler's complaint, Lala Mela Ram was prosecuted for having abducted a minor from the lawful custody of her guardian, apparently Mrs. Tytler. Lala Mela Ram was arrested and his application for bail rejected, even though there did not seem to be the flimsiest ground to regard Mrs. Tytler as the lawful guardian of the girl. It was not a Crown case, but the district authorities felt so interested in the matter that they briefed the senior advocate at Simla for the prosecution at public cost. But on December 7, 1901, when the prosecution had closed

its case, Sohagi was cross-examined by the defence, and confronted with her husband, who was present in the court. She identified him as her husband and the prosecution discovered that the bottom had fallen out of its case. The prosecution had closed its case. The police had had more than six weeks for investigation. The Magistrate, however, went out of his way to adjourn the case so that the prosecution might find out whether a certain missionary lady at Neemuch had any useful evidence to tender. On December 11, the case was again adjourned to December 24.

In January 1902, an application for the transfer of the case to some other court was presented in the Chief Court at Lahore. A Division Bench of the Chief Court transferred the case to the court of District Magistrate at Simla enjoining upon him at the same time to decide whether Mrs. Tytler could be regarded as the lawful guardian of Sohagi. On April 28, Lala Mela Ram was acquitted honourably.

This case made history. It established that relief from physical distress of a minor during famine does not make the relieving organization or any one of its nominees the lawful guardian of the minor. Christian efforts at securing Hindu children in famine-stricken areas became tempered with greater discretion henceforward.

On April 4, 1905, the earthquake havoc in Kangra again put the Arya Samajic world in the Punjab on its mettle. The extent of havoc wrought was only equalled by the urgency of the demand for its relief. Thousands of people had been rendered homeless. Hundreds were buried alive under the debris of falling roofs. As soon as the news became known at Lahore, the Lahore Arya Samaj once again decided to undertake relief measures under the lead of Lala Lajpat Rai. Bakhshi Sohan Lal's unique knowledge of his own district

made him a very successful organizer of the relief work. Though the Government was straining every nerve to render help to the distressed, its officers were very often surprised to find themselves outstripped by the zealous workers of the Arya Samaj. The relief work done at this time added a glorious chapter to the history of the Arya Samaj.

In 1908, there was a famine in Oudh. This time the Arya Samajists, not content with rescuing orphans only, undertook the task of rendering relief to the distressed in the famine-stricken areas on an extensive scale. Lala Mehr Chand, Lala Balraj, Lala Parkash Chand and late Lala Hari Chand Kapur were amongst those who were sent to render relief work on the spot. They travelled far and wide and distributed corn, cloth and other necessities of life on a large scale. Such work by non-official Indian agencies at this time was so seldom done that at several places the starving population would not accept relief until it had made enquiries from the officials whether it could do so with impunity!

In March 1918, famine raised its head in Garhwal. As soon as accurate information became available, Mahatma Hansraj issued an appeal for men and money. It was an eloquent testimony to the hold which he had established on the people, as well as to the creditable work which the Arya Samaj had done in this connection, that in a very short time Rs. 84,000 was collected in response to his appeal. A large number of workers was sent to establish relief distributing centres in various parts of the affected area. Pundit Mastan Chand, Lala Mohan Lal, Mehta Sawan Mal, and Swami Nityanand, went to Garhwal to assist in relieving the distress. The famine-stricken areas were divided into four 'circles' for the purpose of distributing relief from door to door, even in places where no ordinary means of conveyance were available. A sum of Rs. 41,496 was spent on this work. Towards the close of the

campaign, Mahatma Hansraj himself toured the affected area and visited the various relief centres. The work thus done by the Arya Samaj under Mahatma Hansraj's lead was very much appreciated by the afflicted Hindus of this sacred land of Hinduism. A public address was presented to him at Pauri, the headquarters of the district when Garhwalis of all ranks and conditions joined in a public demonstration of their gratitude.

Mahatma Hansraj received almost twice as much money as he needed for the relief of distress in this area just then. The problem of utilizing the remaining funds in his hands was beset with difficulties. It was at last decided with the concurrence of Garhwal intelligentsia that the money be spent in founding scholarships for the poor and deserving students from the area.

In 1921, Garhwal became the scene of another famine. As soon as the news of distress in this area was received, Mahatma Hansraj decided to start work forthwith. Three depots were established for the sale of food-stuffs at concession rates, and corn to the value of Rs. 24,000 was distributed.

For several years scholarships were given to poor and deserving Garhwali students receiving education in various parts of the country. On an average Rs. 2,000 a year was spent on these scholarships. By 1925, this amount exceeded Rs. 3,000; 31 scholarships being given to students in the various schools, colleges and professional institutions. Garhwal is a poverty-stricken area of the United Provinces, though its people are adventurous and can be found scattered all over the country. It was now felt that it would be much better if schools were opened in various parts of Garhwal itself for spreading education in this educationally backward area. In 1925, Pundit Kirpa Ram of Dogadda presented the Sabha with a house which was

remodelled at a cost of Rs. 1,100 and a primary school was established there. The results were encouraging. The next year a second school was opened at Khumani, where again the Sabha was fortunate in receiving a gift of land for school purposes. By 1928, schools had been opened at Banghat, Biram Khal, Chalusen, Pauri, Bindal Gam, Kasani, Dugadda and Khumani. The Pauri school has now been converted into a High School. In November 1937 it had 210 students on its rolls. It has a commodious building of its own erected at a cost of Rs. 20,000, a part of which was raised locally.

In 1920, when the Punjab had hardly recovered from its own troubles of the previous year, news came that Orissa was in the grip of a terrible famine. It was difficult to make a successful appeal for funds just then, but Rs. 1,000 was set apart for the purpose of providing immediate relief. Lala Mohan Lal was sent to tour the area and to report on conditions there. An orphanage was started at Sakhi Gokal on August 1st, 1921. This was followed by the opening of relief centres at Sakhi Gokal and Domodarpur, where relief was distributed in one form or another. In the wake of famine came cholera and a medical mission had to be organized for its relief as well.

The work had soon to be extended to Cuttack and Bilaspur. Here again four depots were established, where a large number of men, women and children was cared for. An orphanage and a widows' home were set up, the inmates of which were ultimately transferred to various institutions in the Punjab. An orphanage was opened at Cuttack, which is still being maintained at a cost of about Rs. 1,000 a year.

Meanwhile news came from Chhatisgarh in the Central Provinces that famine conditions were fast spreading there also. Mahatma Hansraj, therefore,

decided to start relief work. Fourteen workers were sent, who set up five centres for distributing relief among the distressed inhabitants of 200 villages round about. Two hundred orphans rescued from this area were brought to the Punjab and cared for in the orphanages already established at Lahore, Bhiwani and Multan.

The relief of distress in Orissa and Chhatisgarh cost about Rs. 40,000 which generous donors had placed at the disposal of Mahatma Hansraj in response to his appeals.

In May, 1921, famine conditions overtook several districts of the Punjab. In the Kangra district relief measures were undertaken under the direction of the late Lala Hanumant Das. Arrangements were made for the supply of corn at much lower rates than those prevailing in the bazar. It was estimated that this entailed a burden of Rs. 100 daily, which Bakhshi Tek Chand bore cheerfully.

Similar conditions prevailed in certain districts of Jammu and Kashmir State, particularly in Mirpur, Kotli and Bhimbar. Pundit Mastan Chand and Lala Khushhal Chand were sent to organize relief work there. Their work was so much appreciated that Pundit Mastan Chand was placed in charge of the distribution of official relief by the State.

In 1922, there were communal riots in Multan which rendered hundreds of Hindus destitute. The Sabha spent Rs. 2,000 in helping the homeless and afflicted Hindus.

Similar troubles occurred in 1924-25 on a much larger scale at Kohat and Mahatma Hansraj again came to the rescue. Here the extent of the damage was so great that for some time it was difficult to persuade the Hindus to return to their homes. The Sabha undertook the difficult task of advancing money to many middle class families in order to

enable them to resume their former position in Kohat.

When plague broke out in an epidemic form in Jammu in 1924, Pundit Bihari Lal and Dr. Asa Nand did admirable work in the area. The Indus floods of the same year affected a large part of the district of Muzaffargarh, where four relief centres were opened. And the Jumna floods in the same year once again found the workers of the Sabha in the field, doing admirable work under the leadership of Mahatma Hansraj.

The Bihar earthquake of 1934 was a terrible disaster and attracted relief workers from all centres. Mehta Sawan Mal, Lala Dev Raj, Lala Khushhal Chand, Pundit Rishi Ram and Lala Ram Chand did particularly useful work. Thirteen relief centres were opened in various parts of the province and two hospitals were run. The Sabha's main contribution, however, was its assistance in the reconstruction of the destroyed homes of the people. But for the guidance and help of the Arya Samajic workers, the Collector of Durbhanga declared, it would have been very difficult to do the work successfully.

The memories of the Bihar earthquake were yet fresh, when there was another still more disastrous earthquake at Quetta. Here again relief work was organized by the Sabha. Dr. Asa Nand and Dr. Dwarka Nath did admirable work in medical relief, and so did also the students and the staff of the Ayurvedic College and the Mahila Maha Vidyalaya.

Thus whenever afflicted humanity cried for relief, Mahatma Hansraj did his best to relieve its sufferings.

CHAPTER XV

A CHALLENGE TO HINDUISM

Mahatma Hansraj's sphere of activities was usually confined to the Punjab, the North-Western Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Kashmir and parts of Sind. But no call for service was too distant for him ; famine in Bihar and Orissa and scarcity in Garhwal found him ready to put his hand to the plough and successfully organize relief work on a large scale. There were other humanitarian activities in which the Arya Samaj under his direction often took the lead in rendering social service in a field which hitherto the Christians had made peculiarly their own.

But in the second half of the year 1921, came a call to Hindu India from a place thousands of miles away from Lahore. On August 19, 1921, started what was officially described as the " Moplah rebellion " in Malabar (Madras Presidency). Moplahs are the descendants of Hindu converts to Islam whose conversion was made easier by the foolish policy of the rajas of Calicut. Tradition has it that in order to attract Arab merchants and sailors to settle in his country, the raja declared that every family in certain sub-castes should surrender one of its members to be adopted into Islam by these merchants, so that they might have enough sailors for their ships ! Never had religious magnanimity gone to such foolish lengths even in India, the home of religious toleration ! The progeny of these early converts multiplied in the land of their birth, though there are reasons to believe that, prior to the Khilji conquest of Malabar, they were about to be re-absorbed into their original religion.

When Malik Kafur invaded Malabar he discovered many people there who, though they were Hindus in all outward appearance, could recite the Muslim confession of faith. The Khilji conquest seems to have revived Muslim culture among these converts. Their descendants made the most fanatic of Muslim zealots.

Living in the midst of these otherwise thoroughly Hindu tracts, the Moplahs proved a constant thorn in the flesh of their Hindu neighbours. Malabar is the home of orthodoxy as well of Vedic culture. Described in the Puranas as the *Punya Bhumi*—the land of religious merit—even to-day it boasts of families of Brahmans who have always regarded it as their sacred duty to be able to chant correctly the entire Vedic text from memory. They were content peacefully to follow their religion, as they understood it. Moplah fanaticism, however, took no notice of their unoffending nature and the Hindus have had to pay dearly for their faith several times.

But all earlier tales of Moplah fanaticism pale into insignificance when compared with what happened in 1921. The Khilafat agitation, started to bolster up an institution which even in Turkey was fast dying out, fanned the fire of Moplah fanaticism to the extent of making them believe that they were soon coming into their own! This brought them into conflict with the British authorities in Malabar.

Warrants were issued for the arrest of Mr. Ali Mushiyar, the leader of Moplahs in Malabar, on the ground of his "subversive activities." He took refuge in a mosque in Tiravannagari, where his followers endeavoured to prevent the police from arresting him and on August 19, attacked a police party sent for this purpose. This set fire to Moplah fanaticism and in a short time the entire country-side had risen in "rebellion." Ostensibly the Moplahs were said to have risen to show their

sympathy with the Khilafat movement. A flag captured on August 20, bore the Khilafat legend and called upon all, young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor to join the 'holy' war. But they soon transferred their fury against the British Government to their unfortunate Hindu neighbours. They were 'kafirs' (infidels), it was declared, and for them there was no safe place in this holy war. Unfortunately the only representatives of British authority in the scattered villages of Malabar were the village policemen who were in many cases Hindus. They were the first victims of Moplah fury. It was easy to direct Moplah wrath from Hindu policemen to Hindus in general. Then followed an orgy of arson, loot, rape, murder and forcible conversion to Islam which, though it might have some parallels in Moplah history, was unsurpassed in the annals of British rule in India. More than 3,000 Hindus were forcibly converted at the point of the sword.

But the most unfortunate feature of the entire episode was the conspiracy of silence which the press in India generally adopted towards these tragic happenings. The fact that there was a "rebellion" in Malabar among the Moplahs was of course known to everyone. Their acts of plunder, arson and murder could not be concealed for long, though even here there was a lurking sympathy for them in the attitude of a certain section of the press for the simple reason that the Khilafat problem in Turkey was said to have provided the mainspring of the Moplah wrath against the Government. They were some time described as 'fighting in defence of their religion.' But of the tales about their indiscriminate fury and forcible conversion to Islam not much was said in the press.

As soon as the devastation wrought by the Moplahs became publicly known, relief measures were organized by a Central Relief Committee

set up under Mr. G. K. Devadhar of the Servants of India Society. The local Congress Committee also undertook relief work. Even then, not much was said about the disaster which had befallen the Hindus; no mention was made of the sad plight of the forcibly converted Hindus or of the possibility of their readmission into the Hindu fold. Some of the Bombay newspapers did touch on these unhappy incidents, but neither the Hindus nor the Muslims attached much weight to them. Most of the people, whose hearts bled for the distressed in Russia and China or for the murdered Christians and Muslims in Turkey, kept their ears shut to the wailings of the Hindus of Malabar, lest their sympathies should stand in the way of 'the political advancement of the country.' It was then that Mahatma Hansraj stepped into the breach.

In his introduction to the Report of the work of the Arya Samaj in Malabar, he writes :—"It was Dewan Radha Krishan who first collected press cuttings from Bombay papers and sent them on to me with a request that I should do something to relieve the sufferings of the Hindus in Malabar. But I had many misgivings about the success of such an undertaking. The atmosphere in the country was not very favourable. Malabar lay so far away from the Punjab. The newspapers were keeping quiet about these incidents and it was not very easy to shake the public out of its lethargy. There were some who refused to admit that this work lay really within the sphere of the Arya Samajic activities. Further, the Kerala Congress Committee and the Servants of India Society had started relief work. Taking all these factors into consideration I decided to proceed only after consulting some Madrasi gentlemen. On September 21, 1921, on the occasion of the Anniversary of Simla Arya Samaj, we held consultations with

several Madrasi gentlemen who happened to be there. We had two problems :—

(1) To reconvert those Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islam.

(2) To help those Hindus who had suffered and had been forced to leave their homes for Calicut.

" Our Madrasi friends told us that we should have to collect funds ourselves. They were further of opinion that success in the work of reconversion would be rather difficult. This was not encouraging. Though the conspiracy of silence in the press continued, the news that leaked out from Malabar was so harrowing that the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha adopted the following resolution on the 16th October, 1922 :—

" 'The Moplahs of Malabar have committed great atrocities on the Hindus and have forcibly converted a large number of them. Under these circumstances it is necessary that the forcibly converted Hindus be reclaimed and helped. The President of the Sabha (Mahatma Hansraj) is authorised to issue an appeal for funds and make necessary arrangements for the work of reclamation as soon as possible.' "

The following appeal for funds was thereupon issued by Mahatma Hansraj.

" *The afflicted Hindus of Malabar and our duty towards them*

" It is now a matter of common knowledge that the Moplahs in Malabar not only desecrated the Hindu temples but also forcibly converted the Hindus. This has been admitted by the Government and the Congress and there are no doubts about it. Of course, opinion is still sharply divided on the question of the extent of the atrocities committed on the Hindus. Some estimate that some

three thousand Hindus were forcibly converted, others put it at one thousand, while some put the number at five hundred only. Whatever the number, none can deny that the Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam.

"What will now become of these afflicted Hindus? Some Muslim leaders have declared that the forcible conversion of the Hindus to Islam was against the tenets of Islam. But this declaration alone cannot undo the michief that has already been done. Responsible Muslim leaders should go a step further. They should issue a statement and broadcast it amongst the Muslims of Malabar declaring that the forcibly converted Hindus are not Muslims at all and no Muslim caste-group can keep them within itself. Further if and when such Hindus want to go back to Hinduism, the Muslims should place no obstacles in their way but should rather help them to be reconverted to their original faith.

"The Hindu leaders should declare that the forcibly converted Hindus can return easily to their faith and should call upon the Hindu caste-groups to afford them full facilities.

"It is a matter of great pleasure that several Hindu leaders and Shri Swami Shankracharya have risen to the occasion and have declared themselves in favour of reconversion of their unfortunate brethren in Malabar. If the combined efforts of the Hindus result in the return of these converts to the Hindu fold, in future none will dare forcibly to convert the Hindus. Such forcible conversion wouldbe of no use if the gates of Hinduism are found open for such victims of tragic circumstances, and particularly if the Hindu caste-groups are found ready to take back to their bosom such of their members as become victims of such tragic circumstances.

"But Malabar is the home of untouchability and people there are steeped in several kinds of superstitions. It is possible, that some caste-groups should offer opposition to the reclamation work. It is necessary, therefore, that some scholarly lovers of their religion should go there as soon as the martial law is withdrawn, console the afflicted and wake the caste-groups to their duty so that they might become ready to reclaim them.

"The Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, Lahore has decided that the work be taken up and a fund be started for the purpose. Scholars of English and Sanskrit would be sent to Malabar who would start a movement for the reclamation of forcibly converted Hindus and persuade the caste-groups to receive them back.

"Moreover those persons who have been forcibly converted and whose homes have been destroyed have to be given adequate help. If the funds at our disposal prove sufficient, we would extend our help to those Hindus as well who have retained their faith through their sufferings.

"I appeal to those Hindus who have a love for their religion to extend their helpful hands towards alleviating the sufferings of their brethren in Malabar. They should send their contribution to the undersigned so as to enable the Sabha to start the relief work as soon as possible."

Mahatma Hansraj had never been guilty of mincing matters and his outspoken appeal caused some flutter in certain interested quarters. Malabar was far away from the Punjab, and (it was said) the Arya Samaj as such, had no special interest in the matter. To raise the question of readmitting into Hinduism even Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islam less than two months before would, it was feared, strike a blow at the much prized "Hindu-Muslim Unity." Counter-statements were issued, the public was

warned against allowing this question to take a "communal" turn. But Mahatma Hansraj had felt this to be a challenge to Hindu culture and tradition. If the Hindus in Bombay and Madras refused to take much active interest in this question, that was not his fault ; it afforded him an opportunity to prove that the Arya Samaj under his lead would not allow this challenge to Hindu culture to go unanswered. It might be said that there were Arya Samajes in other parts of the country as well, some of them nearer Malabar than the Punjab ; but the Arya Samajic world elsewhere had no Hansraj to lead it in the task of undoing the mischief wrought by the ferocious Moplahs. So he went ahead. It was characteristic of the man that the first subscription he personally solicited was from his mother. Happy in enlisting her sympathy, he was sure that subscriptions would now flow in. But the days immediately following the appeal were days of great anxiety. A worker called his attention to the statements issued against his appeal by two prominent Arya Samajic leaders. He refused to be deterred. He had started the work, and would leave it to the public to judge between them.

Even though the response was as yet far from encouraging he decided to start work. Pundit Rishi Ram was sent to Malabar on November 1. In October the relief fund amounted to Rs. 381 only. Accordingly Pundit Rishi Ram was instructed not to start independent relief work at once, but to confine himself to reclaiming the forcibly converted Hindus. In Bombay he held consultations with Mr. Devadhar, who was of opinion that it was inadvisable to start *shuddhi* work just then. Pundit Rishi Ram therefore, started work as a volunteer under the Malabar Relief Committee and the Kerala Congress Relief Committee. He also tried to bring together the forcibly converted Hindus. By the end of November, subscriptions

amounted to Rs. 1,739. On 29th November, the Sabha started rendering independent relief to people from the middle-class who, owing to their social status, would neither seek help from the Congress camp nor enter the Central Malabar Relief camp. After this the relief work went on gathering strength daily. Subscriptions also started pouring in, as the Hindus began to realize their duty. Pundit Rishi Ram then began issuing pamphlets in order to win popular support for the reconversion of the forcibly converted Hindus. He addressed many conferences of various castes with the result that the higher classes as well as the Pundits now came round to the view that these forcibly converted men could and should be reclaimed.

"When the work increased, Lala Khushhal Chand and Pundit Mastan Chand, were sent to Malabar in February 1922. Pundit Mastan Chand was put in charge of a depot in Mainad. Here over 4,000 children and women received relief daily. His successful experience in Garhwal and Jammu famines was of great assistance to him in handling such large numbers.

"Lala Khushhal Chand first worked at Calicut. Soon after this he felt it necessary to go into the afflicted area and personally examine the condition of the sufferers. He also intended bringing those persons back to the Hindu fold who had been forcibly converted and had been living as such on account of the fear of the Moplahs. Placing little value on his own life, he toured the affected area. His efforts, supplemented by those of the local workers, succeeded in bringing back to Hinduism a large number of the forcibly converted Hindus. His graphic accounts of the conditions in the afflicted area were published in several newspapers. This greatly helped in touching not only the tender hearts of the Hindus but in making them loosen their purse-strings as well. Money began to pour in.

"A sum of Rs. 70,811 was collected by October 18, 1922. Rs. 44,968 were spent in Malabar on the work of giving relief to the distressed and reconverting the Hindus to their faith."

The successful reconversion of 3,000 Hindus who had been converted to Islam by force was a personal triumph for Mahatma Hansraj. But for him, Hindu India would have taken this conversion lying down and added another disgraceful chapter in her history. But the Hindu public, which was not allowed to learn the truth at first and was, therefore, so chary of helping in this good cause, opened its purse-strings generously, when they found in him a champion of the Hindu faith, who for its sake was prepared to brave all risks and overcome all obstacles. The most touching testimony to his good work was a generous contribution of Rs. 2,000 from one of the two prominent Arya Samajist leaders who had printed a letter to oppose his appeal when it was first published. Thus did time heal the wound that the hand of a colleague had inflicted on Mahatma Hansraj.

CHAPTER XVI

Converting the Malkanas

During the Muslim rule in India many converts were made to Islam. Temptations of various types were held out. Pressure in various forms economic, social and political, was sometimes applied to make converts. Very often the converts retained their sub-caste names and, usually, they formed a class of their own. This was very much the case among the Rajput converts to Islam. All of them retained not only their Hindu sub-castes but very often their social relations with the Hindu Rajputs of the same sub-caste. Naturally, these converts were not completely subjected to Muslim personal law, and usually continued to be governed by their tribal and customary law, which was Hindu in origin. Many Muslim religious practices sat very lightly on them.

Astounding as the continued existence of these Hindu practices among the Muslim converts under the Muslim rule may appear, certain sections of these converts succeeded in achieving a still more unique distinction. It is likely that some of those whom pressure of one type or another had driven into the Muslim fold, never took their conversion seriously. They were converted *en masse*, and their conversions had implied renunciation of the Hindu faith rather than active adoption of the life of conforming Musalmans. Such seems to have been the case with what were called the Malkana Rajputs, in certain districts of the United Provinces as well as in Bharatpur State. Even if they did at first enter upon the lives of believing and practis-

ing Musalmans, they do not seem to have continued either in those beliefs or practices for long. They considered themselves Rajputs—a distinctly Hindu tribal name. They continued their sub-tribal organization, calling themselves by sub-castes which existed in the parent Hindu fold from which they had separated. Of Muslim beliefs and religious practices they absorbed practically nothing, so much so that some of them had actually reverted to Hinduism at a time when Hindu orthodoxy did not usually tolerate the re-entry of such converts. Such, for example, was the case of the Bachhal Rajputs in the district of Mathura and the Ganthara Rajputs in the district of Aligarh. This occurred more than a century ago when *Shuddhi* as a movement had not been heard of. Similarly, some Malkanas had finally been readmitted into Hinduism in the beginning of the twentieth century in the district of Etavah.

Towards the end of 1922, the question of regularizing the status of these Rajputs was taken up. Many of the Malkana Rajputs were eager to return to their original faith, most of the practices of which they had continued to observe. The re-admission to Hinduism of the recently converted Moplahs—as detailed in the last chapter—seems to have revived some hope in them of being welcomed back into their original faith. A meeting of the Rajput Upkarni Maha Sabha held in December 1922, under the chairmanship of Sir Nahar Singh of Shahpura, decided to accept these Malkana Rajputs back in their original Rajput sub-castes. This was followed by a similar decision by the All-India Rajput Sabha, the most representative organization of the Rajputs in India.

It was one thing, however to pass resolutions and quite another to translate them into practice. Neither of the two bodies was in a position to give practical effect to the pious wishes expres-

sed in their resolutions. Unfortunately, before any substantial step could be taken, these two resolutions were published in the Lahore *Akash Vani*. This created a stir in the Muslim press in the Punjab. It is not surprising that since the Punjab had supplied the agency for restoring the Moplahs to the Hindu fold, it was the Punjab Muslims who were roused by the publication of these resolutions to what they considered the necessity of keeping "brother Muslims" within the Muslim fold. No one would have quarrelled with them if they had undertaken to do this by instructing their brothers in faith in the rudiments of their religion. But the Malkana Rajputs stood rigidly apart from the main current of Islam and the Muslim missionaries who went to the United Provinces in high hopes were disappointed to find that Malkanas did not respond to their efforts to convert them into conforming Musalmans. They then reversed their tactics. Instead of preaching to the Malkanas that they should remain within the Muslim fold, they began to preach to the Hindus that they should keep the Malkanas out. As they could not do this successfully as Muslim missionaries, some of them assumed the garb of Hindu preachers and went about trying to create an atmosphere among the Hindus in the United Provinces averse to the reconversion of the Malkanas.

It was then that the Bhartiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha was founded with its headquarters at Agra. The late Swami Shraddhanand was elected President and Mahatma Hansraj Vice-President. It was decided to appeal for money and men for the work.

In pursuance of this decision Mahatma Hansraj issued an appeal for funds. The work requiring to be done was enormous. The Malkana Rajputs lay scattered in some four hundred and eighteen villages of the United Provinces and Rajputana. Not

only had they to be formally readmitted into the Hindu fold but it was necessary to reconcile the Hindus to their return. As usual, Mahatma Hansraj put his entire heart into the task to which he had promised his support. It was not enough to issue an appeal and wait for the public response; it was necessary to educate the Hindu public so that it might accept these long-lost brethren in the faith. This involved heavy work. Deputations were organized for the collection of funds. A constant stream of letters bearing his signatures began to flow out to Arya Samajes and Arya Samajists all over the country, asking them for their support of this cause. One of the earliest donations of Rs. 300 a month came from his friend and class-fellow, Rai Bahadur Lala Amar Nath.

As usual, however, the forces of opposition were waiting for their chance. First came the growl of the political India. There were various Muslim individuals and organizations which had long been making converts to their faith undisturbed. It was now discovered, however, that for the Hindus to follow their Muslim brethren was a great political blunder, a stab in the back of the movement for Hindu-Muslim Unity. But those who were thus convinced of the harmful nature of this movement were not prepared to check similar and even worse activities among the Muslims. In the name of Hindu-Muslim unity appeals were made to the leaders of the Arya Samaj to stay their hands. Mahatma Hansraj had anticipated such criticism of the *Shuddhi* movement in an article published in the Lahore *Arya Gazette* towards the end of February, 1923. Writing on 'the Hindu-Muslim unity and the Hindu Sanghathan' he had boldly declared that any movement which had the object of reorganizing Hindus on a solid basis need not be considered as antagonistic to Hindu-Muslim unity. He had claimed therein

the same rights for Hindus and Hindu organizations to make converts, as the Muslims had always enjoyed. So he went on with his work of collecting funds and gathering round him a band of volunteers prepared to do the work, undismayed by political clamour and religious fanaticism. In a meeting of the political leaders at Agra it was decided that Mr. C.R. Dass, Pundit Moti Lal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad should join Swami Shraddhanand in making a tour in the area concerned in order to find out whether the Malkanas were really willing to enter the Hindu fold of their own accord. Soon, however, the futility of this procedure became apparent. The very next day the political leaders conceded the right of the Hindus to welcome back the Malkanas into their fold. But there was a sting in the tail of the statement that they issued. They called upon Swami Shraddhanand, President of the Bhartiya Shuddhi Sabha, to dissociate himself from the movement. By this time Mahatma Hansraj had reached Agra to take charge of the work of *Shuddhi* among the Malkanas on the spot. Consultations were held in order to meet the situation created by this demand of the political leaders. On Mahatma Hansraj's advice, Swami Shraddhanand refused to dissociate himself from the *Shuddhi* work, as long as the Muslim political leaders went on continuing their religious activities side by side with their political work. It was then suggested that both the Hindu and the Muslim organizations should withdraw their workers from among the Malkanas for a year. The Muslim workers had never imagined that the issues raised by the political leaders would go to the length of challenging what they considered to be their undoubted right to make converts from Hinduism. On their refusal to comply with this demand, the political leaders had to leave Agra, not, however, without a declaration from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad which called upon the Muslims not to

dispute the right of the Hindus to reconvert the Malkanas to Hinduism. This declaration was mainly based upon the fact that Pundit Moti Lal and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had interviewed some Malkanas at Agra and found them not only willing to return to the Hindu fold but vehemently asserting that they were already Hindus in their beliefs and religious practices.

Though the negotiations between the Shuddhi Sabha and the political leaders were ostensibly being carried on by Swami Shraddhanand on behalf of the Shuddhi Sabha, it was Mahatma Hansraj's presence at Agra that played the decisive part. Swami Shraddhanand besides being an Arya Samajist leader had already entered the political field. The political leaders had hoped to succeed in persuading him to dissociate himself from this work, which some said was an attack on Hindu-Muslim Unity. Mahatma Hansraj, however, was untrammelled by any political commitments. It was realized that whatever the Congress leaders said *ex cathedra* would have little effect on Mahatma Hansraj, unless they could convince him that the work he was entering upon was bad either in its conception or execution. This it was impossible to do. They realized, therefore, that he would carry on the work unaffected by their favours or frowns. His presence at Agra at this juncture thus succeeded in keeping alive the Shuddhi Sabha.

Before leaving the Punjab, Mahatma Hansraj had exerted himself to the utmost in collecting money and a band of zealous workers. On March 1, 1923 the donations to the Shuddhi fund stood at Rs. 406. On March 8, they had risen to Rs. 3,085. The third list acknowledged in the *Arya Gazette* brought the collections to Rs. 5,749. It was only then that Mahatma Hansraj felt that he was in a position to redeem the promise that he had made to the Shuddhi Sabha, not only to help it with

a generous contribution but also to undertake to defray all the expenses of the work in the month of April 1923. By the end of March 1923, the collections made by Mahatma Hansraj stood at Rs. 34,000. He had already started sending honorary workers to Agra in March. The students of the recently founded Brahma Maha Vidyalaya left for Agra under the lead of their enthusiastic *Acharya*, Pundit Vishwa Bandhu Shastri. On April 3, Mahatma Hansraj reached Agra to take personal charge of the work on the spot. This was followed by the arrival of more honorary workers drawn from among the ranks of the staff and the students of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, School and the Ayurvedic Department. The central office of the Shuddhi Sabha was established at Agra. In a very short time, Mahatma Hansraj had collected a large number of workers drawn from various sources. The Punjab, as usual, contributed the lion's share of honorary workers, but the United Provinces did not lag behind.

Mahatma Hansraj was the Vice-President, and President-in-charge of the office of the Bhartiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha. The Sabha had a Working Committee which met from time to time, usually under the presidentship of Swami Shraddhanand who came down from Delhi for the purpose. The work of the Sabha, however, was mainly carried on by the office-bearers and the workers under the guidance of Mahatma Hansraj. Among these the names of Kanwar Madho Singh, Babu Nath Mal, Lala Salig Ram, the Maharaja of Shahpura, the chiefs of Triva and Kharva, the Rajkumar of Amethi and Raja Sir Rampal Singh may be particularly mentioned.

The work proved more difficult than had been imagined at first. The resolutions of such large organizations as the All India Kshatriya Maha Sabha did not cut much ice with the local Rajputs.

They had to be persuaded into accepting the Malkanas into the Hindu fold. But another characteristic of the Hindu caste system now created a good deal of difficulty. The Malkanas had kept alive their sub-caste names, and on their reconversion to Hinduism demanded that they be accepted on equal terms by their brother Rajputs of the same sub-castes.

Now no Hindu caste is more exclusive than the Rajputs. Nowhere else is the sense of gradations within the same sub-caste more pronounced. Community dining on equal terms even among the Rajputs belonging to the same sub-caste is some time impossible. The whole system is worked by a detailed code which it is not easy to break. Unlike the West, in India every smoker does not carry his pipe on him. When people meet socially, one or more common *hukkas* are used in the assembly. The circle of those who may use the same *hukka* is very often limited, some time to the narrow field of a small sub-caste. The etiquette of the *hukka* made and unmade the social grade, just as did the minute rules of community-dining. A further consideration was the fact that the *Shuddhi* of the Malkanas had to be carried out in the United Provinces, the home of hide-bound orthodoxy. The Malkanas rightly demanded that on coming back to their original faith, they should be accepted as normal members of the sub-caste which they had left centuries ago. As naturally, the caste Rajputs usually retorted that if there could exist within the Rajput fold several grades of Rajputs distinguished by community-dining and *hukka* groups, the claim of Malkanas who had only just been received back into the fold of Hinduism from Islam to even the highest Rajput honours was preposterous.

Mahatma Hansraj's task was, therefore, by no means an easy one. Usually, when the Arya

Samaj had set about admitting converts to its fold, their position had not raised caste-problems. The Arya Samajists accepted neither the existing caste divisions nor the minute restrictions which the caste or the sub-caste groups entailed. Every convert to the Arya Samaj was admitted to the Arya Samajic brotherhood at large. Thus no convert was made to feel any compunction with regard to his social status. The task here, however, was much more delicate. The Malkanas were not being admitted into the Arya Samajic fold, but were coming back to occupy their original position in Hindu society as organized into caste and sub-caste groups. Thus they were not becoming Hindus alone, but Rajputs of a particular sub-caste.

This was a task the fulfilment of which depended neither upon Mahatma Hansraj's own convictions nor on the practices of the Arya Samajists. He had to act not as an Arya Samajic leader but as a worker of the Bhartiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha which consisted very largely of non-Arya Samajist orthodox Hindus. It is true that all the workers under his immediate direction were Arya Samajists, but that made the problem all the more difficult.

Mahatma Hansraj, however, rose to the occasion. Despite the mutterings of a very small section of rather puritanical Arya Samajists, Mahatma Hansraj decided that the main work of his lieutenants was on the one hand to persuade the Malkanas if necessary to come back into the Hindu fold and, on the other, to convince the caste-Hindus of the desirability of readmitting them into the Hindu caste system. Thus the actual ceremony of *Shuddhi* was usually performed by the orthodox Pundits, according to orthodox rites. This necessitated several consultations with the leaders of Hindu orthodoxy about the way in which these ceremonies had to be performed. They had neither to be so elaborate as to wound the susceptibilities

of the Malkanas nor so perfunctory as to make it possible to suggest that they were not efficacious. But under the wise lead of the late Lala Raghbar Dyal, and thanks to Mahatma Hansraj's powers of persuation, a comprehensive formula was adopted which struck a very happy golden mean.

It was, however, much more difficult to persuade the Rajputs to accept the Malkanas within their various sub-caste groups. The problem was further complicated by the fact that there was no one organization or caste-brotherhood with which necessary negotiations for a happy solution of this problem might be carried on. Every sub-caste had to be persuaded separately—some time the same sub-caste several times over in different localities. It was a wearying work. But ignoring all difficulties, a task in which, as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald once said, Mahatma Hansraj was an adept—he went on patiently with his job.

To facilitate this task a Conference of the Rajputs from all over the country was invited to meet at Bindraban on May 30 and 31. It was a gathering, the like of which had, probably, never been seen in modern times. Rajputs belonging to all sub-castes, and including among them ruling princes, big jagirdars, great landowners, heads of sub-castes down to the proverbial man in the street, all flocked to Bindraban. Some of the sub-castes probably had never met together on one common platform. The preparations for this large gathering required long and careful planning; and Mahatma Hansraj had many anxious moments while the arrangements were being made. Ostensibly, it was a Rajput Conference. Mahatma Hansraj was there on sufferance. Of course, he had undertaken to defray the entire cost of the Conference out of the funds at his disposal for *Shuddhi* work. Formally, all the work had to be done through others, though actually his lieutenants were busy putting everything right wherever they could. For example,

on the evening before the Conference was to meet, it was discovered that the *pandal* had not been erected. It was a big job to set up a *pandal* capable of accommodating some 10,000 visitors. As Mahatma Hansraj sat anxiously considering the matter, one of his lieutenants, who had been busy elsewhere approached him and asked him the reason why. On hearing how somebody had bungled, he quietly undertook to get the thing done overnight. Rallying the visitors who had come in large numbers to attend the Conference he set to work, and by 3 A.M., the *pandal* was ready! The very next morning it was discovered that suitable arrangement had not been made for meeting the President-elect, Raja Sir Nahar Singh of Shahpura. A procession had to be arranged befitting this distinguished descendant of Maharana Pratap, and yet those who should have been busy about it again proved not as successful in their organization as they were in their enthusiasm. Once again Mahatma Hansraj had to use his own band of workers and send them here, there, and everywhere, to ensure that everything was suitably organized. The sigh of relief which Mahatma Hansraj records in his *Diary* on the success of these arrangements is probably unequalled for its intensity in the whole of his career.

The Conference at last met. On the evening of May 29, 1923 the Working Committee, consisting of some one hundred influential members decided that dining with the converted Malkanas should be permitted and that they should be admitted to the brotherhood of *hukka*. It was a momentous decision. It not only made the admission of the Malkanas practicable but swept away the cobwebs of sub-caste restrictions, some of which were centuries old.

On the afternoon of May 31, 1923 the main Conference was held in the big *pandal*. Raja Sir Nahar Singh's entry was greeted with loud shouts

of *Maharana Pratap ki Jai*, which must have swept at least the younger and, therefore the most susceptible, elements in the audience off their feet. On the dais sat ranged the flower of Rajput chivalry, met together now not for warding off a sack of Chittor but to welcome new entrants into the Rajput fold. Swami Shraddhanand, Mahatma Hansraj and Pundit Girdhar Sharma were there performing the task of the *purohitas* of old in keeping their Kshatriya *yajmans* to the right path. The Conference opened with prayers led by an orthodox Pundit. The address of the President was then read by his Private Secretary. The decision of the Working Committee taken the preceding evening was now implemented and it was decided to hold a great *Sahbhoj* the next day. As the *bonafides* of the Bhartiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha and its organizers had some time been questioned in interested quarters, mostly by Muslim preachers—desperately trying to hold back the Malkanas from joining the Hindu fold—it was thought appropriate that this historic gathering of the Rajput clans should set its seal of approval on the work that it had been doing. This was done by thanking the Sabha, especially Swami Shraddhanand, the President, and Mahatma Hansraj the Vice-President-in-charge of the Sabha at that time, for the work they had done.

To give practical shape to this decision, on May 31, all the Rajputs assembled on this occasion, including the President took their meals together along with the converted Malkanas. This sight must have reminded some of the visitors, at least of the traditional *Agni-kul Yajna* performed at Mount Abu for the resurrection of the Rajputs in good old days. Mahatma Hansraj must have been feeling that the fates had entrusted to him the task of guarding this holy *Yajna*, not of the Brahmans as the Kshatriya had done in the days of old but of the war-like Kshatriyas themselves. What a role !

Another similar, though a smaller, gathering was the one held at Mainpuri under the auspices of the Maharaja of Mainpuri, mainly to facilitate the admission of the Chauhan Malkanas into the Chauhan Rajput fold. It was attended by several Rajput Rajas, who thus associated themselves actively with the work of reconversion.

But it was, as we have said, an uphill task. The Conference could no doubt create enthusiasm for the work and extend their blessings to all that was being done, but Mahatma Hansraj realized the limitations of their usefulness when he set out to attend the readmission of Malkanas at Amar Singh ka Nangla in the district of Etah on June 6. The village lay some distance from the station. He reached the village on a bullock cart. All arrangements for the *Shuddhi* ceremony were complete, when the Malkanas declared that they would not undergo the necessary ceremony unless the Rajputs of their own sub-caste expressed their willingness to dine with them. From ten in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon the wrangling went on. The caste Hindus would not give up their prejudices, even though they were prepared to welcome the Malkanas back into the Rajput fold. It was a nerve-racking moment. Among the 'interested' visitors were the Muslim Maulvis, who had been using all their art in dissuading the Malkanas from undergoing the purificatory ceremony. The police was also there, obviously to keep the peace and see that no undue pressure was used. When all seemed to be lost—though Mahatma Hansraj was far from admitting defeat yet—at three o'clock entered into that assembly a young Rajput, Thakur Daulat Singh. After learning what all the wrangling was about he started roundly upbraiding the "caste" Rajputs for their churlishness in thus playing into the hands of their enemies, though apparently they seemed to be guarding their ancient traditions. It was a critical

moment. How would the elders take this childish outburst of a young man, backed though it was by the decisions of the Kshatriya Maha Sabha and the precedent of Bindraban Conference? But the irrepressible youth luckily won the game. The elders looked sheepish and announced there and then that they would have no objection to dining with the Malkanas. The *Shuddhi* ceremony was performed. The Malkanas were gladly admitted into the Rajput fold and the *Sahbhoj* that followed convinced the Malkanas that they had now re-entered into their social heritage.

The work of the Muslim preachers presented the second great difficulty that had to be surmounted. There were scores of them spread about in all the villages wherever the Rajputs were to be found. They soon discovered that it was impossible for them to convert the Malkanas into conforming Muslims. Some of the Muslims had, therefore, to be content with raising difficulties in the way of their returning to the Hindu fold. This they tried to do by rousing the caste prejudices of the Rajputs on the one side and the vanity of the Malkanas on the other. There is reason to believe that sometimes some of these Muslim workers went about in Hindu garb, so as the better to succeed in their attempt at misleading the Malkanas and the Rajputs. When everything else failed they began to throw mud at the Arya Samajic workers, representing them sometimes as members of the depressed classes, sometimes as utterly irreligious people, association with whom, would defile all Hindus! Whenever and wherever a *Shuddhi* had to be performed, they were always found present in large numbers, utilizing every opportunity of fanning discontent and turning every small thing to their own advantage. They sometimes even went so far as to threaten a breach of the peace by rousing the fanaticism of the Muslim public in areas where they were to be found in considerable numbers. But Mahatma

Hansraj went on doing his work uninfluenced even by threats of personal violence. The opposition at times took a very subtle turn. At Farrukhabad the Muslim tongawalas would not carry him, and some of the Muslim shopkeepers refused to serve him and his fellow workers. Mahatma Hansraj was usually amused by such incidents and took them as part of his day's work. But, occasionally, the matter went beyond a joke. One evening on alighting from the train at Agra, he decided to walk from the railway station to the headquarters of the Shuddhi Sabha. As he passed through the bazaars attended by one fellow worker, he was surprised to find them deserted. Here and there, they met men armed with sticks patrolling the bazaar. Unconcerned he reached his lodgings to find them guarded. His host hastened from his residence and welcomed him with open arms. Mahatma Hansraj was surprised to find him carrying a pistol. He was then told that since early morning, rumours had been rife in the city of an intended attack by Muslim hooligans on the office of the Shuddhi Sabha. The workers, it was stated, had been threatened with death. In his inscrutable way, Mahatma Hansraj merely smiled at these wild rumours. All night the inhabitants of Agra kept vigil, afraid of trouble breaking out any moment. Undismayed, Mahatma Hansraj went up to the roof of the house where he used to sleep, refusing to have any special precautions taken on his account. It was characteristic of the man and a good example of his relations with his fellow workers, that they started amusing themselves by indulging in a little speculation as to what would happen if a successful attack was made. "If we are murdered, Mahatma Ji," said his companion, "the papers will have it that Mahatma Hansraj had become a martyr. They would mention me only as an attendant of yours." "I am more afraid, Mastan Chand," retorted Mahatma Hansraj, " of the curses of your

wife ; she would say that a senile old man did not know how to behave. Of course, she would say, he himself had enjoyed life, but had not the sense to see that her husband should be spared to her." After amusing himself in this way, he enjoyed almost as restful a sleep that night as on any other. The morning proved that it was a false alarm, and the workers settled down to their work unconcerned.

On another occasion as Mahatma Hansraj stepped out of the railway carriage, a police constable gave him a message from the local Sub-Inspector of police requesting him to call at the police station. Mahatma Hansraj cheerfully accompanied the constable. It soon transpired that the Sub-Inspector was too ill to move out of his bed and had therefore, adopted this extraordinary method of asking for Mahatma Ji's presence. When he arrived, he found the Sub-Inspector in bed. After the exchange of usual courtesies, the Sub-Inspector requested him to desist from carrying on the work of *Shuddhi* for some time, as the Maulvis had fanned the fanatacism of the people, and there was a chance of breach of the peace, if he persisted in carrying on his work. Mahatma Hansraj sat indifferent to the threats of likely danger and told the Sub-Inspector that these left him unmoved. He was doing nothing that was either unlawful or unpeaceful, and he did not care if his carrying out his mission landed him into difficulties with the violent section of his opponents. He then came out of the police station to where the *Shuddhi* had to be performed as if nothing had happened.

Quite apart from these alarums and excursions the work that Mahatma Hansraj did there in the months of April, May, June and July might have taken a less stout-hearted leader a much longer period. He was not content with being "the philosopher, friend and guide," of the move-

ment from his headquarters at Agra. Wherever the work of *Shuddhi* demanded his presence, he used every possible means of conveyance to reach the outlying villages. When everything else failed, he would walk the distance in the burning heat of the summer, and put much younger workers to shame by the cheerfulness with which he bore every discomfort. Even when his fellow-workers requested him repeatedly to use a conveyance that was available, he refused to make any distinctions between himself and them. He always saw to it that he was no more comfortably lodged or boarded than they were. In fact the pace at which the work was done under his guidance was so great that not many of his fellow-workers from outside the United Provinces could stand it as long as he did. His *Diary* records very often with affectionate regret how now one, now another, of his fellow-workers showed symptoms of breaking down under the strain and had to be sent back.

Even the administration of the affairs of the Sabha was not an easy task. He was a rank outsider to the local workers. Nobody had driven them as hard as he was now driving them, and sometimes it seemed as though tempers might get frayed in the terrible heat of the summer at Agra. But a gentle word here and an encouraging nod there, and a spirit of accommodation in small matters everywhere, made it possible for him to overcome all such difficulties.

But, try as a man may to get the upper hand of nature, she always takes her revenge. Months of relentless work in the burning heat of the summer at last told upon his health. The spirit was undismayed but the frail body could not continue the pace much longer. Early in July he developed fever, but he insisted on keeping his engagements to speak at Fa rukhabad and Mainpuri. At the latter place however, the doctors

who examined him insisted on his going back to Agra at once. There the boil that had been troubling him for some time was diagnosed as a carbuncle and he was told to get back to Lahore at once in order to get it operated upon. Accordingly, he left for Lahore on July 10, and had to be carried to the train in a chair. When he alighted at Lahore he was still unable to move and again had to be carried to a waiting car outside the station. The physicians, who examined him that afternoon, could not reach any agreement. On the 12th morning, he was operated upon by Col. Tait. The operation was fortunately successful. Mahatma Hansraj soon recovered, though it took much longer before he was able to move about.

But even if the body demanded its toll, the spirit had accomplished a great deal. During the three months that he was there, reclamation work had been done in 147 villages and more than thirty thousand Malkanas had been brought back to the Hindu fold. And this was not all. Mahatma Hansraj had refused to be buffeted by political winds. The result was that the Shuddhi Sabha survived the denunciation of even the mighty Congress—not as mighty then as it is now. When Swami Shraddhanand gave up his connection with the Shuddhi Sabha on account of ill-health, Mahatma Hansraj stepped into the breach and guided the destinies of the Sabha till the end of 1924, when he resigned from the presidentship. A new chapter had been added to the history of Hindu India.

There were those in the Arya Samaj who fought shy of associating themselves with this work. Not that they did not consider it desirable, but to them it was something which an Arya Samajist should not touch with so much as his finger-tips. For what was happening? The Malkanas had been brought back into the fold of

Hinduism; back to idol worship, to the caste-system, to belief in the re-incarnation of gods, to all that went along with a satisfied orthodoxy. As a superficial view of the matter, this characterization of the movement seemed to be just. But superficiality had never appealed to Hansraj; just as in Malabar, so in the United Provinces, he threw himself heart and soul into this task of widening the bounds of ancient Indian culture. While others chafed, he so completely identified himself with the movement as to issue a personal appeal for funds and thus made its success a personal question. That was not all; If Mahatma Hansraj was committed to seeing the thing through, no less did he commit the College section of the Arya Samajists in the Punjab to his way of looking at things. They decided, along with him and under his lead, to be pioneers in this task of readmitting *en masse* large numbers of Hindus back to their old faith from an alien faith. So to Agra flocked the Professors of the Dayanand College, the entire staff and all the students of the Brahma Maha Vidyalaya, most of the *Upadeshaks* of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, teachers and students of the Ayurvedic College and Dayanand High School. It is extremely doubtful, whether without his lead such a large number of workers, many of them honorary, could have been gathered at Agra in those critical months of April to June. But with him there, all difficulties were smoothed away and all obstacles removed.

He and his team of workers set to work in those months as they had probably never worked before. Preaching to hostile villagers in the Punjab had been a child's play to what they had to do now. If they were thirsty in the blazing months of April, May and June, they could not have a glass of water in those predominantly Hindu villages; they were told to go to the nearest well and quench their thirst there. So they all went

armed with a piece of string and a convenient bucket for drawing water. Like the Maratha soldiers they carried their meals on them, but unlike the Marathas they had neither horses to carry them nor saddle bags in which to put their allowances of parched grain mixed with country sugar. So they worked cheerfully and faced all the hardships to which they were subjected.

They thus added—thanks to Lala Hansraj—a splendid chapter to the history of the expansion of the Aryan culture in India.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ARYAN CONGRESS

The split in the Arya Samaj that occurred in 1893, was healed in 1897, when both the 'sections' of the Arya Samaj were faced by a terrible ordeal on account of the murder of Pundit Lekh Ram at the hands of a Muslim assassin. This, however, proved only a temporary phase, and the two 'sections' of the Arya Samaj drifted apart again. Both the 'sections' followed their own lines of work. The College section was busy using the educational mission of the Arya Samaj for taking its message to all parts of the country. It succeeded particularly well in bringing the educated classes under its influence, and through them a still larger number of their countrymen. The Gurukula section was busy at first in the task of direct propaganda, though later on the establishment of the Gurukula at Hardwar in 1903 gave it a central educational institution to work for. It is necessary to remember that this division, though very pronounced in the Punjab, did not appear in so intense a form elsewhere.

We have already seen that it did not reflect any doctrinal differences. If anything, it represented a difference in temperament. Of course there were times when sectional feelings flared up into unseemly wordy warfare, if nothing worse. The field of work which the Arya Samaj had created for itself in the Punjab was vast enough for both the sections to carry on their work in peace. But for some ugly incidents which

occasionally marred the relations of the two Samajes few people would suspect any division.

The ugliest of these incidents concerned Mahatma Hansraj. The Secretary of the Arya Samaj at Patiala invited Mahatma Hansraj to lecture there when he met him at Ambala. Mahatma Hansraj asked him to consult his colleagues before giving him a formal invitation. On his return to Patiala the Secretary formally confirmed the engagement in a formal invitation. Mahatma Hansraj, when he reached Patiala discovered that the local Executive Committee was not prepared to desecrate its pulpit by allowing Mahatma Hansraj to speak therefrom. As was his habit Mahatma Hansraj refused to be ruffled at the indignity to which he had been subjected. But those responsible for inviting him refused to pocket this insult calmly and arranged for his lecture elsewhere. The audience that turned out to hear him was the biggest that had ever gathered in Patiala to hear any one speak.

But such incidents were rare. Both sections usually went on doing their work without fuss, and in the face of external danger they very often united. In 1903, when their whole system of famine relief was challenged and it seemed that the law of the land was threatening to convert famine relief by the Christian missionaries into a regular agency for making converts, the two sections of the Arya Samaj at Simla united in repelling that attack. Thanks to their common efforts and the help of several eminent lawyers from outside, the court held that a missionary who relieved the distress of a famine-stricken Hindu child did not thereby become his guardian—the ward being thus free to go back to his religion if he liked.

A similar occasion arose when the Patiala Govt.

prosecuted some Arya Samajists for sedition in 1910. Once again sectional pettiness was laid aside and both the sections fought out the issue side by side.

The murder in 1923 of an Arya Samajic worker, Lala Ram Chandra of Akhnoor (in the state of Jammu and Kashmir) on account of his efforts to get depressed class Hindus admitted to the privileges of the caste Hindus, threatened Arya Samajic work among the depressed classes. Once again both sides closed their ranks, and under the leadership of Mahatma Hansraj an Arya Defence Committee was set up to take adequate steps to prevent the repetition of such an occurrence in future.

In the Malkana *Shuddhi* work Swami Shraddhanand and Mahatma Hansraj fought side by side against the serried ranks of Muslim fanaticism, political narrow-mindedness and blind orthodoxy. That was probably the first occasion in which these two leaders came so conspicuously together. The results justified the co-operation which both had so ungrudgingly given.

While the country was in the throes of the political agitation started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1922, many Arya Samajists were swept off their feet into the vortex of political agitation. There was nothing surprising in this. Patriots to the core, they could not but be attracted by a movement which promised to translate into fact their visions of many years. But what Mahatma Hansraj could not easily tolerate was the snug feeling which some of them now began to entertain, tacitly if not openly, by their conduct if not by their words, that the work of the Arya Samaj was over, or that the Arya Samaj should hereafter function only as a subordinate body of the Indian National Congress. He opened negotiations with the leaders of the other section for the setting up of a Central Board of the two sections of the Arya Samaj.

He was astounded to discover that according to the leader who at that time was supposed to wield the greatest amount of influence among the Arya Samajists of the other section, no such arrangement was possible for the curious reason that Mahatma Hansraj had no scruples in regard to taking his meals at a table on which meat was served to other guests. Thus his well meant efforts came to nothing, though a little later the two sections at Lahore successfully co-operated in a co-ordinated programme for observing the anniversaries.

The twenties of this century were a period of trial for the Arya Samaj. It is true that, defying Moplah fanaticism, it had succeeded in restoring to Hinduism the forcibly converted Hindus in Malabar. It was to its credit that it had been able to bring back into the Hindu fold the Malkanas who had remained nominal Muslims for some centuries past. Its very success, however, had roused the Muslim fanatic elements to fury. They had been encouraged by the implied, if not always open, condemnation of the Arya Samajic activities by many Muslim leaders. The wave of Hindu-Muslim unity which was then passing over the country made many politicians, Hindus and Muslims alike, find fault with the Arya Samaj for its propagandist activities, without at the same time saying a word about the similar activities of the Muslims. Attempts had been made to damn with 'bell, book and candle' the whole Arya Samajic work for conversion. Controversial Arya Samajic literature had been pronounced dangerous to Hindu-Muslim Unity, without the same principle being extended to works produced by Muslims or Christians.This dangerous tendency to make the Arya Samaj a scapegoat for the country's political shortcomings was at one time carried so far as to demand that even the *Satyartha Parkasha* be banned. Little wonder that this running fire to which the Arya Samaj had been

subjected, not only by rival religious groups but by political organizations as well, should produce feelings of disquiet among the Arya Samajists. What was worse, it tended to produce a definitely anti-Arya Samajic atmosphere in certain places. Coupled with religious fanaticism, it led to several murderous attacks and finally to the murder of even such a leader in the Arya Samajic and political world as Swami Shraddhanand. At other places it led to interference even with the ordinary activities of the Arya Samaj. Police licenses for the *Nagar Kirtans* (singing processions) that had invariably formed a part of the anniversaries of the Arya Samajes, were in some cases refused, in others hedged round with impossible and humiliating conditions. It is true that such interference by the Government in the religious activities of the Arya Samajists had been neither systematic nor frequent. It formed, however, a dangerous interference with the religious liberties of the Arya Samajists alone, which, if allowed to go unchallenged, might become systematic and extensive. On the other hand there were not only the murderous attacks and actual murders of Arya Samajic workers to be taken into account, but also the general Muslim attitude towards the convicted murderers. They became popular heroes, and in one or two cases the most respectable Muslim citizens of the locality thought it an honour to accompany their biers. The Arya Samajes naturally began to ask themselves how far such a state of affairs could be allowed to go unchallenged. The murderous attacks had started in the Punjab and culminated in the murder of Swami Shraddhanand at Delhi. But it was in the United Provinces that interference with the normal religious activities of the Arya Samajists had become most noticeable.

In these circumstances the Arya Sarvadeshik Sabha, Delhi (The International Aryan League)

decided to convene an Aryan Congress at Delhi on November 4th to 6th, 1927. The Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, Lahore was not represented on this Sabha, but the President, of the League, Mahatma Narayan Swami, wrote a letter to Mahatma Hansraj towards the end of September informing him of the proposal. On October 8, the Reception Committee of the Congress sent a formal letter of invitation to the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha. In view of the exceptional nature of the occasion it was suggested that instead of the Congress being held under the Sarvadeshik Sabha, a separate organisation should be set up for the purpose. The President of the Sarvadeshik Sabha telegraphed his agreement. On this the various Arya Samajes of the province affiliated to the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, decided to participate.

An amusing situation now arose in regard to the selection of the President of the Congress. The Sarvadeshik Sabha had not only been perpetuating the division of the Arya Samajists into the 'Mahatmites' and 'Cultured' which had emerged in the Punjab in 1893 but had also been closely hugging the comfortable allusion that the 'Cultured' Arya Samajists were outside the charmed circle of the Arya Samajists as defined by the Pundits of the Sabha. But when it began to look about for a suitable President for the Aryan Congress to be held at a critical juncture in the history of the Arya Samaj, it found itself driven by the hard logic of events to select for this honour Bhai Parmanand, a 'Cultured' Arya Samajist. When he pleaded inability, they offered it to Mahatma Hansraj. Mahatma Hansraj declined the honour, and suggested that Mahatma Narayan Swami, the President of the Sarvadeshik Sabha, be asked to preside. On October 28, the Secretary of the Sarvadeshik Sabha again telegraphed to Mahatma Hansraj requesting him to accept the presidentship. The situation was

somewhat delicate. Mahatma Hansraj was being asked to preside at an important session of an organization most of the organizers of which had for some time challenged his right to sit with them on the Sarvadeshik Sabha. He once again declined to accept the honour.

The Reception Committee now decided to send its chairman, Pundit Ram Chandra Dehlvi, to Lahore to explain the situation and make a personal appeal to Mahatma Hansraj to assume the responsibility of guiding the Congress. Pundit Ram Chandra accordingly came to Lahore and explained the whole situation to Mahatma Hansraj who thereupon accepted the offer.

It was intended to make this Congress as representative as possible. Each Arya Samaj was to elect one delegate for every ten members on its rolls. Though the period for making arrangements for the Congress was short, it was expected that the enthusiasm of the Arya Samajes would be able to get over this difficulty and that the Session would be a complete success.

Mahatma Hansraj accompanied by several delegates from Lahore left for Delhi on November 2, reaching Delhi on the 3rd morning. A large gathering had collected together to welcome the President-elect and take him in a procession to the presidential camp. But on November 2, the Reception Committee had been informed by the Police that in view of the panicky atmosphere of the city, the Police could not permit the procession that had been arranged for, on the opening day of the Congress on November 3. Partly from panic, partly as a protest, the Reception Committee decided at the last moment to abandon the presidential procession as well.

This created misunderstandings and imparted no little heat to the proceedings of the Subjects Committee. A vote of censure was moved in the form of a motion

for adjournment. It was then revealed that the Government had not *withdrawn* the permission supposed to have been granted to the Reception Committee for a procession on the opening day of the Congress but had never *granted* it. Mahatma Hansraj was thus placed in a very difficult position. On the one side he had to soothe the overstrung nerves of those who saw in the alleged action of the Government a fresh repetition of that denial of religious liberty which they had met to protest against, on the other hand he had to defend the Reception Committee for its action. He succeeded in extricating the Subjects Committee from the position in which the Reception Committee had landed it. Then began a discussion on the various questions on the agenda. These were, however, very much coloured by the indignation of a section of the delegates at the refusal of the Government to allow the procession. The main contentious resolution was one concerned with remedies against what was termed a growing denial of religious liberty to the Arya Samajists in the various parts of the country. Mahatma Hansraj and his colleagues were of the opinion that this denial had not, hitherto, been the general policy of the Government but rather the result of individual indiscretions of panicky local officers. He, therefore, was not yet prepared to join issue with the Government. He was sure no heroic remedies, such as the general Satyagraha suggested by a section of the Arya Samajists in the Congress, were either necessary or practicable. The Congress, however, had mainly been called by the Arya Samajists who were dominated by the Gandhian political ideology of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. It is not surprising, therefore, that despite the opposition of Mahatma Hansraj, the Subjects Committee, after a heated discussion lasting over many weary hours, finally passed a resolution endorsing the Satyagraha. But the searching criticism, to which their rather crude proposals were subjected in the Subjects Committee resulted in the resolution taking a

form at which even its sponsors were not very happy. The logic of events was too much for them.

The Congress opened its sitting in the afternoon of November 4. It was a very impressive gathering of representatives of the Arya Samajists from various parts of the country. Many eminent Hindu leaders, including Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj, also attended the session at one time or another. The delegates included Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Diwan Chand, Bhai Parmanand, Professor Ram Dev, Shriyut Ganesh Shankar Vidyarathi of Cawnpore, Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda of Ajmere and Pundit Ghasi Ram of Meerut, in addition to the élite of the Arya Samajists from Delhi and the Punjab.

The proceedings began with the chanting of Vedic hymns. It was characteristic of both the gathering and the times, that this was followed by the *Bande Matram*. After that the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Pundit Ram Chandra Dehlvi, welcomed the delegates and the visitors to the Congress and briefly explained the circumstances which had led to their meeting together.

Mahatma Hansraj was then proposed to the chair and occupied the Presidential seat amid the deafening cheers of the assembled delegates. On account of his weak eye-sight the Presidential address was read by Lala Ram Prasad on his behalf. It is a masterly analysis of the situation which the Arya Samajists had to face at that moment and will bear repetition. He said :—

" Having accumulated strength through penance, and a study of the *Vedas*, Swami Dayanand started on his mission and established the Arya Samaj in its present form in 1877.

"The Arya Samaj is based on the 'Ten Principles.' Therein Swami Dayanand enjoined upon his followers the uplift of the whole of humanity. Although Swami Dayanand was an Indian and he loved India dearly, unlike most patriots, he was not satisfied with the

uplift of India alone. He wished well not only to the entire humanity but the whole animate world as well. No religion which limits its message to a land or a nation deserves the name. To put such limitations on it is to lower it from its high pedestal.

" Swami Dayanand held that the message of the *Vedas* given to mankind in the beginning of the creation was universal in its scope and not limited to any one community or country. All Hindus without the distinction of caste or creed were naturally as entitled to share it as they were able to get their share of the Sun and the Moon.

" Rishi Dayanand believed that all that was true in other religions was inspired by the *Vedas*. He held that if he convinced others that some of the things that they believed in were wrong the whole trouble in the religious world would disappear.

" He wrote in his introduction to the *Satyartha Parkasha* :—

" ' There are undoubtedly many learned men among the followers of every religion. Should they free themselves from prejudice and accept the universal truth—that is, those truths that are to be found alike in all religions and are of universal application—and reject all things in which they differ, and treat one another with love and kindness, it will be greatly to the advantage of the world. For, differences among the learned create bad blood among the ignorant masses. This breeds all sorts of sorrows and sufferings, and destroys the happiness of the people. Whoever tries to do anything with the object of benefitting mankind is opposed by the selfish people, and various kinds of obstacles are thrown in his way. But the righteous find support in the belief that truth must conquer and not error.'

" Further, the Swami explains :—

" ' Though we were born in the Arya Varta (India) and still live in it, yet we do not defend evil

doctrines and practices of the religions prevailing in this country, but expose them properly ; in the like manner, we deal with the alien religions.'

" Thus it is clear that what he wrote was not exclusively meant for his own people or land but that he wanted to secure the uplift of the entire humanity.

" Swami Dayanand laboured all his life for the good of the whole world. To achieve this he expounded the truth as he saw it and in doing so had occasion to lay bare the shortcomings in various religious systems. The criteria that he laid down in the *Satyartha Parkasha* for discriminating truth from falsehood are very just. He did not want to injure the feelings of the followers of other religions. He only aimed at winnowing wheat from chaff. A reference to Chapters 13 and 14 of the *Satyartha Parkasha* would at once make one understand the Rishi's greatness. In his introduction to the thirteenth chapter he wrote :—

" ' Our sole aim in writing this chapter is to further the cause of truth and eradicate error and not to injure the feelings of others or do them harm or bring false charges against them.'

" 'Then again in the introduction to the 14th chapter he says :—

" The object aimed at by this criticism is to contribute to the elevation of the human race and to enable all men to sift truth from falsehood by giving them some idea of the teachings of various prevalent religions, as this will afford them opportunities for friendly discussions, so useful in helping them to point out their defects and to appreciate their merits.

" ' It is not our purpose to wrongly condemn *this or any other religion.* On the contrary what we aim at is that whatever is true should be recognised as such and whatever is false should be condemned as such so that no one should be in a position to palm

off untruth for truth or hinder the progress of truth. One is of course free to accept truth or for the matter of that even refuse to do so after it has been published, compulsion being impracticable in such matters. After they have realized their merits and demerits, good men will as a rule imbibe good qualities and reject bad ones. They will root out bigotry and prejudice wherever found. Who does not know of the prodigious amount of evil that has been wrought by bigotry? True, it is unworthy of a man to harm others and thus throw away his own chance of happiness in this uncertain and transient life. In case the reader comes across, in this criticism, anything contrary to facts, it is hoped he will point it out and we shall make the suggested changes where necessary. For this criticism is designed to mitigate bigotry, obstinacy, jealousy, malice, hatred and useless wrangling and not to promote them. It is our first and foremost duty to avoid injuring others and to further the well-being of one another.'

"Thus inspired, Swami Dayanand asserted truth and refuted untruth. There was nothing new in his way of doing it to upset anyone. Every reformer, who undertakes reform of any sort, resorts to apportioning praise and blame wherever it is due.

"When animal sacrifices and other such rites had become the order of the day in the *Yajnas*, Buddha had to raise his strong voice against such practices. Naturally his voice was meant to reach the ears of the Brahmans, the protagonists of these evil customs at that time. He does not spare them; we find him calling them 'foolish' in the *Dhamapada*.

"Later on when Buddhism became full of absurd beliefs and superstitions, Shankracharya attacked Buddhists even as vehemently.

"Outside India as well, the same story is unfolded. When Christ began his ministry he found the Jews steeped in ignorance, superstition and evil.

He called them names and used the harshest words for them. At one place he referred to the Jews as 'the descendants of snakes.'

"Similarly, when Muhammad was born in Arabia, he found the people in a still worse condition. He tried to reform them and bring them over to his side. In the *Quran* we come across many harsh words used by him for his opponents, who were mostly Jews and Christians. We find him referring to his opponents as 'infidels', 'polytheists', 'damned', and 'hellish.'

"Even when we come to later times, we shall not find many reformers trying to win over those they condemned merely by soft words. When evil practices crept into Christianity, Luther came forward to condemn them ruthlessly. How severe is his criticism? He called those Catholic clergymen who were selling Indulgences for money, the 'flag-bearers of Satan.'

"But Swami Dayanand did not limit his message to one class or people. He came here to propagate a universal religion. It was necessary that he should not only expose the superstitious growth in Hindu religion, but should also deal with similar phenomena in other religions. In this way alone, he believed, would it be possible to convert them to the Vedic religion. If one reformer set out toreform the Jews, another to reform the Christians and the Jews, Swami Dayanand wanted to reform all castes and communities and gather them together under one banner, the banner of the Vedic religion. For this mighty task he worked and there was hardly any difficulty that he did not face and surmount.

"Those who want to silence the voice of the *Rishi* to-day, should clearly understand that they are trying to put back the hands of the clock of the progress of the world. Had Buddha, Shankracharya, Christ, Muhammad and Luther been silenced successfully by their opponents, the world would have been a poorer place to-day. Europe learnt toleration

after years of religious wars which demonstrated how cruel the policy of imposing by force one's view of truth could be.

" The British Government will not easily forget the lesson that Europe learnt at such a great cost. Those who want the voice of the *Rishi* to be silenced by law, should remember that the British will not give up their practice of religious toleration. By now it has become a part of the British character.

" The reformers feel so acutely the evils they are surrounded with that in order to destroy them, they are sometimes led to use strong words to shock those steeped in the bad practices out of them. But the reformers only hate the evil they see, the untruth they discover. It is far from their intention to wound the religious susceptibilities of those belonging to other religions.

" The truth that the *Rishi* preached was for all mankind. He declared that all those who desired to accept this truth be allowed to enter the portals of the Vedic religion. It is true that the Hindus had kept their doors shut for some time: it was not possible to open them all at once. Slowly and steadily the Arya Samaj has succeeded in opening them. The work of admitting outsiders into the Vedic religion was started long ago. Naturally this gave a shock to many non-Hindus ; they had never thought such a thing possible. They had believed that they would be able to admit all the followers of the Vedic religion into their own fold some day and that there would dawn a day when it would not be possible to find even a single Hindu in the whole of India. The Arya Samaj has falsified their hopes. One can easily understand that this aspect of the work of the Arya Samaj has dashed all their hopes to the ground. I think that the opposition that is being offered by Muslims to the Arya Samaj, is due to the fact that the community which they hoped to swallow does not seem to relish

either the prospect or the process. But I hold that the Muslims are exhibiting their weakness by raising their voice against *Shuddhi*. They have been carrying on their work of conversion for centuries undisturbed; and now if the Hindus or the Arya Samajists open their doors wide, the Muslims should not get upset. It is a matter of great satisfaction, that all intelligent Muslims have begun to concede the right of the Hindus to make converts to their faith. It is being said, however, that unlawful methods are sometimes used by the Hindus in this work. But fortunately not one example has been brought forward in which any violation of the laws could be either seriously alleged or proved. On the other hand, we daily come across cases in which the high-handedness practised by some Muslims is clearly visible.

"Our remarkable success in conversion has been followed by some Muslims going astray and taking to terrorising the Hindus—a path that it does not behove sincere followers of any religion to adopt. A few of them have made murderous assaults on those engaged in the work of conversion.

"Some of the Hindus get alarmed when they witness such bloody deeds. The murders, the wounds and threatening letters make them exclaim, 'What will happen now?' But, ladies and gentlemen, let me assure you that even in my old age, all this does not frighten me and make me give up hope. When I witness these happenings, a fire lights up in my heart—the fire of love for my religion. I believe that when the blood of its martyrs is spilt, a religion is sure to see happier days; such is God's law as seen in the history of various religions.

"Is it not a great strain on the patience of the Hindus, that they are being subjected to such assaults? Is it not a matter of great pride that in spite of it all, they have not thought of taking the law into their own hands? Here we see toleration at its

best. The reason is clear. The Hindus do not consider such assaults a means of propagating their religion.

"Not only here, but in another field as well, the Hindus have tried to show their spirit of toleration. The amount of scurrilous literature that has been produced by some Christians and Muslims against the Hindus stands unparallelled in the history of religious polemics in India. Hundreds of books and tracts have been published against the Arya Samaj and its workers. More than three hundred tracts and books have been written on behalf of the Muslims alone against the Arya Samaj. All sorts of abusive words have been used for Swami Dayanand. But the Arya Samaj is proud to say that it neither tried to take the law into its own hands, nor did it even approach the Government for action against such writers. It is true some of the Arya Samajists did not ignore these writings and wrote some books in retaliation. I disapprove of such attempts at reprisals. I think that the scurrilous books of the Muslims could be replied to seriously. And even if that be not possible, the life of such scurrilous literature is not very long. Many books were written against the *Satyartha Parkasha* but how many of them can be seen to-day?

"The religious teachers, who at various times and at different places, tried to reform their people should be looked upon with reverence, even, though one may not agree with their views. To use abusive language about them can only result in hardening the ears of their followers against truth. This militates against the very purpose for which such books are written.

"Another question has, of late, played a prominent part in marring Hindu-Muslim unity. The Muslims now demand that there should be no music before mosques. It is a new demand. It is painful to record that under the pressure of this demand

restrictions have been imposed on the religious processions of the Hindus. This demand puts a great restriction on the life of the citizens, which no freedom-loving man would be ready to accept.

"There have been mosques in India for centuries. Music was played before them. Not even during the Muslim rule, was music stopped before mosques. And again, most of the mosques are in the crowded streets of cities which are very noisy. Until recently the Muslims never asserted that either music or noise disturbed them while they were at prayers. It is a purely artificial demand. I will be failing in my duty if I do not say here that the local governments at some places have shown lamentable carelessness and partisanship in the matter. To safeguard the rights of peaceful citizens is a duty of the government. When their rights are interfered with, it is its duty that it should put an end to such interference, rather than be led by false agitation of mischief-mongers to place restrictions on the processions of peaceful citizens. In my opinion, there is only one solution to this problem, the Muslims should abide by the local custom.

"The Arya Samaj, founded in order to propagate the Vedic religion in the whole world, deems it its first duty to remove all those defects which have crept into the Vedic religion, so that it should be able to carry on the work of reform more effectively. The first and the easiest task is that it should gather all the Hindus together under the banner of the *Vedas*. To fulfil this purpose, the founder of the Arya Samaj placed a definite programme before us, following which we can elevate the Aryan community and reform the whole world. We can call this programme, the work of national reconstruction.

"To act upon this programme of national reconstruction it is necessary to work in a three-fold way :—

1. To stop all leakage.
2. To strengthen individuals.
3. To unite these individuals.

"The second thing which is necessary for national reconstruction is to make the individual members better. For this purpose every Hindu should have a sound body. It is the duty of the rich to maintain wrestling pits to help their brethren keep fit. We should further direct the unemployed Hindus into occupations in which, in addition to earning their livelihood they should also be able to keep their bodies fit. Child-marriage has played an important part in undermining our physique. The absence of *Brahmacharya* has weakened us, with the result that not only is our birth-rate falling but we are becoming an easy prey to all sorts of fell diseases. It is necessary, therefore, that child-marriage be stopped altogether. Moreover, in order to develop better physique we should pay greater attention to our diet and should spend a larger percentage of our income on our food rather than in foolish expenditure on various ceremonies.

"To make us strong and our lives sweeter and happier, it is necessary that we should become practising theists. Belief in God would certainly elevate our lives and make us stronger.

"The third thing is the bringing together of these individuals. A well-woven rope of slender threads can keep a storm-tossed boat safe at anchor. One thousand trained and disciplined soldiers of a well-organized army can defeat thousands of untrained soldiers.

"A small country like Afghanistan under the lead of a Mahmud or a Shahab-ud-Din Ghori, defeated the large ill-organized armies of a considerable number of Rajput kings. A small country like England has so organized itself that no one can stand against it successfully now. Japan was once so weak that four American ships were able to dictate terms to the Japanese Government. But

when Japan succeeded in organizing itself, it became so strong that it defeated Russia, and now everybody looks upon it with respect. All these are miracles of organization. The Hindus have not realized its value. It is necessary to understand that a lecture on union or organization does not necessarily promote it. It is necessary that from the day of birth down to the day of entering on a householder's life, the training given by the father, the mother, and the preceptor be such that it would so discipline our faculties as to make us work in harmony with others when needed.

"Our greatest defect is that we do not know how to act corporately. As the *Rig Veda* declares, our salvation depends upon our being able to sit together, talk together and understand one another. Swami Dayanand in his *Introduction to the Rig and other Vedas*, put great emphasis on these hymns. The life of a community is founded upon its corporate strength and when its organizing capacity is lowered, this leads to the disappearance of righteousness and loss of self-respect and culture. The *Vedas* decree that we should live in society like members of an organism, but we have so mis-translated this hymn as to create and perpetuate divisions between Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras and have thus made the Hindu community the laughing stock of the whole world.

"Swami Dayanand gave organized corporate life the foremost place in the Arya Samaj and acting upon its true spirit made the Arya Samaj a democratic body. In the constitution of the Arya Samaj every man and woman has a right to vote. The office-bearers of the Arya Samaj are elected by its members. In this way we cut at the root of *Gurudom* and slavery and learn to work together.

"There have been men amongst us who were great workers but there are very few who can work in co-operation with others. As soon as such fortun-

ate workers pass away, their work comes to an end. Many of us do not understand the spirit of co-operation. When we find any one expressing opposite views which we do not uphold we misunderstand his criticism. Men are apt to look at the same thing from different view-points. Corporate life does not demand their giving up their views not even ceasing to stand up for it. What is necessary is that they should lay aside their quarrels in the face of common danger and work together forgetting their individual differences. In the *Mahabharta* when Yudhishtara asks Arjuna to help the Kaurvas against the Gandharvas, he declared 'We are five and the Kaurvas are a hundred but against the Gandharvas we are one hundred and five.'

"The mighty task of national reconstruction lies before us. Our opponents to-day are trying hard to sidetrack us. To silence the Arya Samaj, Government is being approached. If we are to remain alive and kicking, it is necessary for us to take measures not only for our preservation, but for consolidating our strength as well.

"Happily, the tenets of the Arya Samaj have penetrated deeply into Hindu thought. Slowly but steadily the Hindus are being converted to its programme of work. Under these circumstances it behoves the Arya Samaj to keep the programme of Swami Dayanand before it. The mission of Swami Dayanand to-day has found a place in the hearts of the entire Hindu community and to fulfil it is the duty of us all."

When the Congress met on November 5, the number of delegates and visitors had risen to 30,000. The following resolutions were adopted that day :—

"1. This Congress strongly condemns the dastardly murder of Swami Shraddhanand at the hands of a Muslim assassin.

"2. This Congress is of opinion that thousands

of young men should come forward to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, like Swami Shraddhanand.

"3. This Congress condemns the murderous attacks of some Muslim fanatics on Hindus and opines that all these are the direct result of certain provocative public speeches made by some of the Muslim leaders in public. The Congress condemns the inaction of the Government.

"4. This Congress is of the opinion that these murderous assaults are the result of a deeply laid conspiracy. It requests the Hindu members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures to request the Government to depute non-Muslim Police agents or an impartial judicial commission for investigation.

"5. This Congress records its appreciation of the restraint shown by the Hindus in the teeth of such provocative circumstances."

When the Congress met on the 6th November, three non-contentious resolutions were moved from the chair. These were all adopted unanimously.

It was resolved that in place of the existing caste-system the Arya Samajes should set up a division of society based on one's deeds, character and attributes. Another resolution was adopted fixing the age of marriage at 16 in case of girls and at 25 in case of young men. It was further declared that the demand of some Muslim divines that the Muslim law of blasphemy should be applied to non-Muslims was not in keeping with the modern theory of jurisprudence.

The most important resolution of the session—at least to those who sponsored it—was the *Satyagraha* resolution. We have already noticed that following the refusal of the Government to allow the public procession on April 4, a move had been made to start immediate *Satyagraha* as a protest. For-

tunately this failed to gain much support. In the Subjects Committee, however, there was a battle royal on this question. When the resolution came up for discussion in the open house it was moved on behalf of Shri Narayan Swami by Pundit Indra. His tale of Arya Samajic woe made a strong appeal to the sentiments of the audience. He brought the recital to an end by asking the audience whether their patience had not been exhausted by Muslim fanaticism on the one hand and Government indifference on the other. With almost one voice they replied "yes." "In that case," he went on, "there was nothing left for them to do but to resort to *Satyagraha*". Pundit Nanak Chand then moved an amendment that the reference to *Satyagraha* be deleted. It was rather a disheartening task, as he had to face a house, the majority of which seemed to be opposed to him in this matter. Lala Diwan Chand, Principal Dayanand College, Cawnpore, seconded the amendment. In a well-reasoned speech which even that hostile audience found it difficult to interrupt, he told them a few home-truths with regard to the resolution and its implications. He yielded to nobody, he declared in his indignation at what had been happening in the country of late. His only quarrel was with the methods by which the resolution proposed to seek redress. The situation did not call for heroic remedies like *Satyagraha*. Indeed an analysis of the resolution proved that it was more in the nature of sabre-rattling than a practical programme which the Arya Samajists could undertake immediately. He was convinced that the resolution was in the last resort bound to remain in-effective. He was, therefore, not prepared to join with the framers of the resolution in indulging in a mere empty threat.

This statement of the case was the outcome of the consultations which had been held between Mahtama Hansraj and his colleagues. They

realized, of course, that it was not likely to produce much effect on the fate of the resolution. As finally adopted the resolution declared :—

"This Congress condemns the obstacles put by the Government in the way of our religious freedom by placing bans on our religious processions. It calls upon the Arya Samajists of India to enrol 10,000 volunteers for the purpose of starting *Satyagraha* in order to give vent to our feeling of resent ment and to subscribe a sum of Rs. 50,000 for a *Satyagraha* fund. The time and the occasion for starting *Satyagraha* in general or in any one locality should be decided at the suggestion of Provincial Representative Assembly by the committee named in this resolution."

A committee consisting of sixteen members was set up for the purpose of giving effect to this resolution.

It had been made clear in the Subjects Committee that only those gentlemen would be appointed to the committee who accepted the resolution without reserve. In the open house some surprise was expressed at the omission of Mahatma Hansraj and his colleagues, but Mahatma Hansraj explained that in order to allow those who believed in the *Satyagraha* to make their programme as effective as possible, it had been decided not to handicap them by the appointment of any 'non-believer' to the committee. He also explained his own point of view in the matter. Personally, he said, he did not believe that *Satyagraha* was necessary or that it would be effective in gaining the ends they had in view.

Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhai Permanand and Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya also addressed the Congress. They all congratulated the Arya Samajists on this sign of their political awakening, though Lala Lajpat Rai was careful to add that in devising re-

medies for their wrongs they should see that they did nothing in haste which they might have to repent at leisure.

There were also several minor conferences held to deal with special problems which were equally successful.

On the 6th evening, the Congress come to an end. As a demonstration it was a great success. As a serious exhibition of Arya Samajic feelings on various questions it resulted in some clear thinking and clarified many issues which had hitherto been somewhat obscure. But the scheme of *Satyagraha* outlined at the Congress came to nothing. It was not that the Arya Samajists were afraid of going through a period of trial—witness the recent *Satyagraha* in the Hyderabad State; but, as Mahatma Hansraj and his colleagues had pointed out, their wrongs as yet were not weighty enough to demand the use of *Satyagraha*, nor was it likely that its application at that stage would appeal to the Arya Samajic public after cooler consideration.

His host, Lala Girdhari Lal, took advantage of Mahatma Hansraj's presence at Delhi to arrange a party to which he invited leaders of the Arya Samaj as well as prominent Congressmen including Mr. S. Srinivasan Iyangar, President of the Indian National Congress and Dr. Ansari an ex-President. An attempt was made on this occasion to enable the Congress leaders to understand the Arya Samajic point of view in matters such as *Shuddhi*. It was interesting to note that, as the conversation during the tea revealed, even prominent Congress leaders of Delhi had no clear idea of the nature of such an invidious piece of legislation as the Punjab Land Alienation Act, even though it had come up for consideration in discussions on Communal Unity in the Punjab.

In the hands of any one anxious to swim with the tide, the Congress would have provided a splen-

did opportunity for winning cheap popularity. Nothing would have pleased some others, in his place, so much as to deliver a fiery presidential address and follow it up by an equally fiery speech advocating the use of the as yet untried weapon of *Satyagraha*, in circumstances which no body was anxious to define accurately and to attain ends which could not always be described as mainly religious. But Mahatma Hansraj, determined as ever to face realities and yet keep his eyes fixed on his ideal , chose to play the difficult role of a guide, counsellor, and friend to his own community rather than bring himself down to the usual level of communal leaders whom nothing seemed to please so much as the denunciation of others. The most constructive resolution of the Congress, advocating the setting up of sub-committees of the Provincial Assemblies for the control of controversial literature, was his personal contribution to the Congress. Pious hopes had never attracted him, and in the Congress he once more proved that though others might yield to their attraction he did not. Thus it was that, though the resolution to re-organise the caste-system on a basis of personal worth was adopted by the Congress, he would not allow the Congress to be used for making office in the Arya Samaj a monopoly of those only who practised inter-caste marriages, as certain too ardent souls had suggested.

CHAPTER XVIII

AN ARYAN MISSIONARY

When in 1885 young Hansraj offered to serve as honorary Headmaster of the Dayanand High School, he could have little realized the full implications of his offer.

While he was working as Headmaster and Principal, he never interpreted his duties so narrowly as to exclude direct *prachar* work from his sphere of activities. He started his life as a Vedic missionary even earlier, if we take into consideration the period of his editorship of the "*Regenerator of Arya Varta.*" Up till 1893 however, the work of organizing the growing institution occupied a very considerable part of his time. And, even though he became the President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1892, he was not able to devote much time to direct *prachar* work outside Lahore. But the split of the Arya Samaj into two sections in 1893 made it necessary for him to devote himself to a larger extent to *prachar*. For one thing, he was once again the President of the newly constituted Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha; for another, it was necessary to organize new Arya Samajes in places where the existing Arya Samajes had passed into the hands of the other section. It was also necessary to rally the local Arya Samajists round some of the educational institutions that had been established outside Lahore. The Albert Victor-Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Abbotabad, the Har Bhagwan Memorial Anglo-Sanskrit High School, at Ferozepur, the Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Hoshiarpur, and the Sain Dass Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Jullundur, often claimed a personal visit. Such visits, whatever their immediate object, were always utilized for delivering public lectures on *Vedic Dharma* and the Arya Samaj. At one time,

Jullundur occupied so much of his attention that for months together he went there almost every Sunday and addressed the weekly congregation in the local Arya Samaj. Whenever the anniversaries of these Arya Samajes were celebrated, he was sure to be there addressing large audiences on religious and moral questions.

Very often he would spend his summer vacation in long tours, during which he was sure to be asked to speak whenever he visited big towns. Occasionally, as in the district of Hissar, he would make extensive tours, visiting one village after another and speaking to the villagers gathered to hear him. Such tours had sometimes their amusing side as well. Propaganda work in the villages could only be done at night, when the cultivators were back from their harvesting work and had taken their evening meals. So the work would start about 9 p.m. and continue till twelve. Then they would make up a rough bed on the bullock carts by which they usually travelled and proceed to another village for the next day's work. It was a difficult task to appeal successfully to these shrewd villagers; but here a pleasant phrase and there a shrewd hit or an appeal to their sense of humour, would go home and produce the desired effect. This type of work involved walking long distances. Means of communications were not well developed in the Punjab before 1914. Metalled roads were few. Of motor transport, there was as yet no sign. The railway served mostly the old grand Trunk Road. Even the headquarters of many districts were not served by the railway. Tongas were not much in use either. The principal means of communication were bullock carts, pack-ponies and very occasionally riding horses. Lala Hansraj was never a good rider. He usually preferred to walk long distances from the places served by the railway to his destination. He never made the defective means of communication a reason for keeping away from the villages.

A very interesting, and for those days a very effective institution was the public *Shastrartha* or religious discussion held with scholars of other religions.

One of the most famous of these *Shastrarthas* was held at Nabha, at the invitation of the late Maharaja Hira Singh on "Widow Marriage." The Maharaja wanted to permit it in his state, but was afraid that to do so without proper religious sanction would have no value. Lala Hansraj responded to the invitation and went to Nabha with several Pundits. The discussion went on for several days. At the end, the Maharaja declared that Lala Hansraj's presentation of the case in favour of widow remarriage had won the day ; and appropriate measures were eventually taken to permit widow-remarriage in the State.

At Lahore, when addressing student audiences or mixed gatherings at the weekly meetings of the Arya Samaj, Mahatma Hansraj sometimes delivered special series of lectures. Once he expounded the *Sandhya* (the Vedic prayer) to his youthful audiences. This was later published in the form of a pamphlet. In another series of lectures, he drew upon his knowledge of the history of various religions and analysed the factors responsible for their extension. In the last lecture of the series, he stressed various factors which he thought should be emphasized in order to facilitate the spread of Vedic religion.

His speeches on the occasion of the anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj always formed its special feature. He prepared these addresses very carefully, collecting facts, marshalling arguments, and gathering authorities for his point of view.

His literary labours during these years were also not inconsiderable. For two years (1897-1899) he acted with Lala Lajpat Rai, as Joint Editor of the *Arya Gazette*, the official crgan of the College

section of the Arya Samaj. Besides performing the routine duties of the editor, he contributed an illuminating series of articles on the sixteen *Sanskaras*. His article on " *Vijya Dashmi* " condemned the current methods of celebrating this festival. Fortunately he found allies in Rai Bahadur Mela Ram, and his young son Lala Ram Saran Dass; a Ram Lila Committee was founded at Lahore to organize the celebrations of the Dasahra on a better basis though still more or less in accordance with orthodox notions. A similar article on Dewali does not seem to have been as revolutionary in its effects. The article on 'Viyas Puja' tried to remind the Hindus of the significance of this almost forgotten festival.

Another series of articles examined the interesting question whether Hindu culture was dying out. By a searching analysis of the social conditions and religious practices, he tried to show that most of what was disappearing was not an essential part of the Hindu culture.

Another group of six articles aimed at a critical examination of the various *Puranic* sects. This was something new in controversial literature. The sobriety of tone and accuracy of judgment of these articles made them as much a scientific analysis of *Puranic* statements, as their critical appraisal.

The question of founding a *Gurukula* was then engaging the attention of a section of the Arya Samajic public. In January and February 1899, he wrote five articles which aimed at analysing the system of education in ancient India in the light of such information as was still preserved in Sanskrit literature.

To him the Dayanand College was an agency for the purpose of conveying the message of Swami Dayanand and, therefore, of the ancient Vedic

culture to as large a number of his countrymen as possible. Sometimes, when others got tired of having what they considered the mills of educational institutions round their neck, he would tell them how they were intended to form, and should form, a part of the religious mission. He himself became a regular Vedic missionary besides being an educationist. In fact, as he was able to get rid of one office after another, his energies came to be centralized to an increasing extent on the direct missionary work of the Arya Samaj. Indeed the one reason which made him relinquish Principalship was his desire to devote himself almost exclusively to *prachar* work. The Fates, however, decided otherwise, and he had to devote a part of his time regularly to educational work as President of the Dayanand College Managing Committee. It was only in 1919 that he secured that leisure which he had tried to obtain in 1912.

His missionary activities correspondingly increased as he became comparatively freer from other engagements, and his attendance at the anniversaries of the Arya Samajes and his visits to the mofussil grew much more frequent. For example the *Diary* for March 1924, records that he spent the first three days of the month at Delhi and the next fortnight at Lahore. He visited Gujrat on March the 21st, Sialkot on the 22nd, and Jhelum on the 29th. In April we find him at Pindi Baha-ud-Din, Rawalpindi, Kalabagh and Bannu. The report of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha from November 1924 to October 1925 tells us that he attended as many as eighteen anniversaries. In February 1926 we find him visiting Lyallpur, Sargodha, Shahpur, Bhallowal, Plodhan, Gujranwala and Jawalapur (U. P.).

This work embraced all types of activities from officiating as Guru (Preceptor) in the *Yajnopavit* ceremonies to the presiding at religious debates and

distributing prizes to successful students in schools and colleges. It had its humorous side as well. While he was returning after presiding at the anniversary of a *Gaushala* at Chunian, he found himself listening to the complaints of a fellow participant in the celebration. Mahatma Hansraj had been received right royally by the organizers of the movement. He was welcomed into the city like a conquering hero. As he was returning after the ceremony he was paid a magnificent sum of Rs. 2 as his travelling expenses! It was suggested that the balance if any should be credited to the *Ved Prachar Fund!* His fellow traveller started complaining that the organizers had displayed a rather niggardly spirit by paying such an eminent scholar as himself only Rs. 35 whereas they paid a musician as much as Rs. 125.

One of his favourite topics was "Shuddh Dhan," acquiring riches by righteous means. Himself poorer than the proverbial church mouse, he never deprecated the amassing of riches as such. He insisted, however, that they should be acquired by righteous means, and kept such by a dedication of a certain portion of one's earnings to charity – preferably one tenth of one's earnings.

He invariably attended the weekly meetings of the Arya Samaj on Sundays wherever he was. At Lahore he was once compelled to absent himself from the weekly meeting in order to be with a guest whom, in the interests of the Arya Samaj he thought it necessary to entertain personally. The *Diary* poignantly records the fact, followed by the question, " I am not sure which of the two was more important—entertaining the Seth or attending the Arya Samaj ! ".

He never refused an invitation to speak on any occasion if he was not otherwise engaged.

All those who sought to get inspiration from him, whatever their status, were sure that he would not

refuse to speak to them simply because the invitation came from a remote village or because they happened to represent the youngest branch of the most recently formed Young Men's Arya Samaj. He loved to address them all and made sure that he could always understand the current pulsating through the lives of all sorts and conditions of men.

When he had once accepted an invitation, he would try to keep the appointment whatever it might cost him in inconvenience and physical discomfort. Awkward train connections, absence of comfortable means of conveyance, miles of *kaccha* road, swollen streams during the rains -- none of these had any terror for him. Even illness would not prevent him from keeping an engagement. The story is still told how, after promising to speak at the anniversary of an Arya Samaj in the mofussil, he caught cold and developed a temperature. He wrote first to one friend, then to another, requesting them to attend the anniversary in his place as he was ill. Both of them were too busy to spare the time. An *Updeshak* calling at Mahatma Hansraj's house, found him rolling up his bed in preparation for the journey. He remonstrated. Prompt came Mahatma Hansraj's reply " What does it matter, whether I die in bed here or in the train ?" There was no answering this merciless, though simple, logic.

On another occasion he fell ill while attending the anniversary of an Arya Samaj, but insisted on speaking at great personal inconvenience, so that those who had come to attend the anniversary in order to hear him should not be disappointed.

He was an effective and eloquent speaker though not a great orator. He prepared his addresses very thoroughly and made copious notes for the purpose. He always tried to be sure of his facts and would spare no trouble to do so. But he never carried these notes with him or referred to them while delivering

his address. He always began slowly, almost in an undertone, but as he warmed up his voice gained in volume so that even his largest audiences—and they often numbered ten thousand—could never complain that he was inaudible. Obviously wrapped up in his subject he yet retained his attitude of self-examination, and his *Diary* very often records how he felt after delivering some of his most important addresses.

When the split in the Arya Samaj occurred in 1893, the College section had few Arya Samajes outside its half a dozen educational institutions. One of the duties of Mahatma Hansraj, both as the Principal of the Dayanand College and as President of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, was to try to establish Arya Samajes wherever he could. The success of the educational mission of the Arya Samaj under his lead naturally led to the expansion of the Arya Samajic work in all the places where educational institutions were found. At other places the presence or the settlement of his students led to the foundation of additional Arya Samajes. Mahatma Hansraj took a keen interest in their fortunes. He helped them with his advice, sent them salaried or honorary speakers, acted as umpire in their domestic quarrels, and took them under his fostering care, if and when, they were attacked by outsiders. In certain cases financial help of one sort or another was also forthcoming. Slowly and steadily, with the help of workers spread all over the country he was able to establish a network of Arya Samajes covering the whole province.

It was a slow process, however. In 1915 there were 152 Arya Samajes big and small affiliated to the Provincial Assembly. But only twenty-two of them sent representatives to the Central Sabha whose members numbered 42. By 1928 the number of the Samajes rose to 240. There were sixty Arya Samajes sending their representatives

to the Central RepresentativeAssembly. In 1937, the total number stood at about 300 but only 178 sent representatives.

For effective work among the Arya Samajes he established the *Veda Prachar Fund.* The Central Sabha maintains salaried missionaries of various types. Their salaries are paid out of the annual contributions made by the Arya Samajes to this fund. Mahatma Hansraj always felt that, besides this annual source of income, the Sabha ought to possess an endowment fund, the interest on which might supplement its annual income, He made persistent efforts to collect money for this purpose. From rather small beginnings he tried to raise a fund worthy of the Sabha's programme. Collections were made for it at all the anniversaries of the Sabha. The jubilee of the Lahore Arya Samaj and the Birth Centenary of Swami Dayanand were also utilized for special collections for the fund.

It was further supplemented by the Pundit Lakhpat Rai Sewa Sangh Fund which was raised by Mahatma Hansraj in memory of the late Pundit Lakhpat Rai,* whom Mahatma Hansraj was proud to call his "best friend", just as was Lala Lajpat Rai.

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* Pundit Lakhpat Rai belonged to a Brahman family of Kathgarh in the district of Hoshiarpur. After qualifying as a Pleader he settled down to practise law at Hissar, where he soon became the leader of the bar. Much more important, however, was his work for the Arya Samaj in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak and Karnal, particularly among the Jats. He was, "the most selfless worker" to quote the words of Lala Lajpat Rai, "that the Arya Samaj has so far produced." A great conversationist, he knew how to reach the hearts of those with whom he came in contact. By the Jats of Haryana he was looked upon as a panacea for all their ills, mental, moral and even physical. Outside Hissar, his silent but solid work was responsible for the elevation of the Sain Dass Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Jullundur to the status of a College, as well as the foundation of the Dayanand High Schools at Delhi and Kathgarh and a Medical Mission at Kathgarh. He was the most intimate friend of Mahatma Hansraj, who, as his *Diary* records, used to open his heart to him on all matters, public and private. He never missed an opportunity of doing anyone a good turn though he always made a point of doing it by stealth so that others might claim the credit if they so wished. Always smiling, he made every one who came into contact with him feel at ease.

This is high praise, but no man ever deserved it better. When he died on December 22, 1925, Mahatma Hansraj decided to commemorate his valuable services to the cause of the Arya Samaj by founding in his memory the Pundit Lakhpat Rai Sewa Sangh. Never had he worked so strenuously for collecting funds as he did now; and by the end of 1928, he succeeded in collecting over Rs. 85,000 from various parts of the country.

Mahatma Hansraj felt the need of good Arya Samajic literature very keenly and he devoted a good deal of attention to this work. The first important publication of the Sabha was "*Patiton ki Shuddhi Sanatan Hai*" in Hindi. Mehta Ram Chandra Shastri was placed on special duty to compile, from his wide knowledge of Sanskrit literature authoritative examples of the *reconversion* to Hinduism of those who had left its fold and also of the conversion of outsiders. This book made history by preparing the way for the re-admission of the depressed classes into the Arya Samajic fold. The success of this experiment led him to place Mehta Ram Chandra on further special duty in order to compile and edit the *Vedic Sukti*, a collection of Vedic hymns fragments bearing on important problems. The text was accompanied by a Hindi translation by Mehta Ram Chandra and an English translation by the late Lala Ram Prasad. Mahatma Hansraj had a great desire to make the *Satyartha Prakasha* available in various languages. Mehta Radha Krishan

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For him there was neither young nor old, rich or poor, great or lowly; he met them all as human beings on the same plane. Even his adversaries were afraid of trying to hoodwink him. He is probably, the only Hindu to whom a Deputy Commissioner entrusted the task of pacifying a Hindu Muslim mob, intent upon killing each other on that most troublesome of all questions: cow-killing on the Id-uz-Zuha.

So great were his services to the cause of the Arya Samaj that Lala Lajpat Rai once remarked that if the Arya Samajists ever practise idol-worship, Pundit Lakhpat Rai would have the foremost claim to be treated as a god.

who had translated it from Hindi into Urdu presented his copyright to the Sabha. This enabled it to publish the first cheap edition of the work in Urdu. When the Sabha expanded its activities to Orissa and Malabar, the need was felt for Oriyan, Tamil and Malayalam translations. To find competent translators was a difficult task. But Mahatma Hansraj succeeded in enlisting local Arya Samajic talent in this work, and with the financial backing of the Sabha translations of the *Satyartha Parkasha* into these languages were completed and published.

Another of his cherished wishes was to place selections of Vedic hymns in the hands of the public. He succeeded in persuading Swami Achyutanand to make a careful selection of Vedic hymns from the *Rig*, *Sam*, *Atharva* and *Yajur Vedas*. These were published with their Hindi translations in four selections.

Mehta Radha Krishan made over the copyright in his biography of Swami Dayanand to the Sabha, which republished it in 1926. A further original contribution towards an authoritative biography of Swami Dayanand was the publication of the *Letters of Swami Dayanand*, parts III and IV, collected and edited by Pundit Bhagwad Datta.

A series of works in English tried to expound various phases of Arya Samajic beliefs and Vedic culture. Pundit Bahadur Mal wrote *Rational Faith in God* in 1926. Lala Sain Das published a study of *Modern Science and Ancient Thought* with special reference to the age and end of our earth. *Conversion and Reconversion to Hinduism during the Muslim Period* by Pundit Sri Ram Sharma was a contribution to the study of the much vexed question of *Shuddhi* during the Muslim rule.

A series of tracts was published in the "Ralla Ram Memorial Series" to commemorate the services of the late Pundit Ralla Ram Bajwaria, one of the most selfless workers of the Arya Samaj*. The first of the series, the *Murli Manohar*, the story of a Hindu martyr for his faith in Afghanistan was written by Mahatma Hansraj himself. This was followed by *Sandhya Kavitavali* by Lala Brij Lal Shastri which gives the text of the Vedic Prayers with a translation in Punjabi verse. The jubilee of Lahore Arya Samaj saw three topical tracts in print: *Jati Rakshak* (Urdu and Hindi) by Lala Khushhal Chand; *Our Programme* (Urdu) by Lala Diwan Chand, and *Half a Century of the Arya Samajic Work* (Urdu) by Pundit Sri Ram Sharma. *Hindu Sanghathan* (Urdu) by Mahatma Hansraj had been published earlier in 1924.

Hamari Samajic Avastha and *Bhakt Varta* by Pundit Mastan Chand, broke new ground in the publications of the Sabha by attacking social problems through the medium of short stories. A series of short biographies was also projected, of which *Maharana Pratap* and *Maharaja Chandra Gupta* by Pundit Sri Ram Sharma were published.

The Dayanand Shatabdi was celebrated by the publication of *A Life Everlasting* by Lala Diwan Chand, and *Our Educational Mission* by Pundit Sri Ram Sharma. The latter described the expansion of the educational programme of the College Arya Samajes in the Punjab, North-Western Frontier, Baluchistan, Delhi and Sind.

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* Pundit Ralla Ram Bajwaria was one of those silent workers who never sought recognition and who never shirked any work, however, difficult. He specialised in rendering help in famine-stricken or plague-ravaged areas. It is said that once while serving in a town overrun by plague, he happened to call at the house of one of its victims who lay moaning on the bed. A Christian missionary who was a medical practitioner, also called about the same time. He examined the patient while Pundit Ralla Ram stood by his bedside. Examination over, the missionary declared that the patient must be operated upon at once, but he was afraid that he had no instrument with him to open the bubo. After the missionary had left in despair Pundit Ralla Ram approached the patient and dug his teeth into the bubo thereby opening it and saving the patient even at the risk of catching the dangerous infection himself.

It is necessary to emphasize here the part played by Mahatma Hansraj in the publication of this literature. Not only were the general plans of many of these publications drawn up under his advice and guidance, but it is was he who selected the topics and the writers for a large number of them. He often read through carefully the entire manuscript of the works before they were sent to press.

The Arya Samaj maintains no ordained priests. Its missionary work is done, its ceremonies performed, its weekly congregations conducted, and its anniversaries celebrated solely with the help of lay workers, honorary and salaried. The Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha was not for a long time able to maintain a separate staff of its own salaried workers. The Dayanand College maintained, out of its own funds, a small number of salaried Updeshaks. The inadequacy of this small group to meet the various needs of the Arya Samaj was obvious. An attempt was therefore made to make up for it by utilizing the services of competent Arya Samajists in various professions; teachers, professors, public servants, doctors, vaids, businessmen, journalists, *Banaprasthis* and *Sanyasis* would perform in the Arya Samaj, functions, which are primarily discharged by priests, ordained or unordained, in other religions.

One of the most difficult tasks which Mahatma Hansraj set before himself was that of persuading Arya Samajists to shoulder the burden of this work in its various aspects. He was always keen to discover new talent and encourage first experiments. For example an entry in his *Diary* for April 4, 1923, has the following interesting item :—

"Professor———addressed the weekly congregation of the Lahore Arya Samaj. He needs much improvement. I am glad, however, that I have introduced a new worker into this field."

An earlier entry of July 8, 1921 records the advice that he gave to another young worker so that he might make himself more useful.

On another occasion he discussed the type of studies some of these workers should undertake. Definite subjects for study were assigned, for example, to Lala Sain Das, Bakhshi Ram Rattan, Raizada Amar Nath Bali and Pundit Diwan Chand Sharma. At Lahore and in the mofussil he tried to establish contacts with those likely to be useful in this work, and encouraged them when once they had taken the leap. He would discuss with them how to prepare themselves for this work, he would listen to their difficulties, personal as well as general, and try to help them in overcoming them. The result was that he was able to draw upon a large number of honorary workers from all parts of the country.

The Dayanand Brahma Mahavidyalya, was founded mainly for the purpose of training Arya Samajic missionaries. Experience proved, however, that though the Vidyalaya produced Arya Samajic workers from among its students and staff, as a seminary for the training of Arya Samajic missionaries even this method failed to produce the desired results. As the result of the labours of the Special Sub-Committee presided over by him, it was decided to offer two substantial scholarships in the Vidyalaya every year to such qualified candidates as were likely to adopt a missionary career after two years of training. Another likely agency which Mahatma Hansraj thought might prove of some use was the Mohan Ashram Hardwar. Though founded earlier, Mahatma Hansraj tried to create here a centre for training Sadhus and converting them into useful religious and social workers. Hardwar makes a great appeal to Hindu religious sentiments, and it was soon possible to find donors willing to pay the cost of raising buildings where

they can spend some time in retirement, if they are so minded, or which can be used by others when the donors are not using them. A set of public rooms was soon added. A decent library was built and books were provided by the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha.

Mahatma Hansraj keenly felt the lack of effective machinery for producing capable workers. His *Diary* has repeated references to this question.

"*July* 8, 1921. I said to Pundit Lakhpat Rai that we should utilize young men, Sadhus and Vanprasathis. New workers should come out of their ranks. They should spend four months together in retreat like the Buddhist *Bhikshus* and devote the rest of their time to missionary work."

In another place he again reverts to this question :—

"*October* 10, 1923. Professor Mehr Chand came to see me. I suggested to him that he should select five students and train them."

On July 6, 1921 he wrote :—

"I put forward my own point of view and emphasized that it is necessary to create new workers. I told him that I consider this to be my life-work now."

Just before his death he was maturing plans for the establishment of the Sain Das Workers' Home, which was to embody his earlier idea of an organized retreat for workers where they could live together and draw upon their common experience, enrich one another by living together, and attract new workers by the spiritual richness of their lives.

He used to encourage some of the younger workers by telling them about his own earlier experiences. There was one story which he very often told those who did not relish the reception which their unappreciative audiences sometimes

accorded to their speeches. He started touring the Frontier Province and delivered his first public lecture at Peshawar. From there he moved on to Hoti, where he was just on the point of repeating the same address on a subject then uppermost in his heart when he discovered in his audience one of those who had heard him earlier. For a moment or two he hesitated whether or not he should change his subject but in the end spoke on the same subject again. The next day when he was starting to address a new audience at a third place, he was startled to find the same gentleman once again in the audience. This time he had to take longer to decide whether or not to repeat his discourse there as well. "But," said he, "my audiences here or elsewhere have not yet started acting on the advice which I have been giving them in my addresses. Where is the harm then if I continue repeating myself?" With a shrug of his shoulders he plunged into his subject and was once more discoursing eloquently.

He never wantonly said an unkind word, even about his opponents. Personal criticism he neither noticed nor replied to. But he stood identified with certain institutions, and if they were attacked, woe betide the unfortunate individual when Mahatma Hansraj got his chance. Even on such occasions, however, he never lost his dignity or descended to sneers or personal invective. But he did tell the truth—at times even mercilessly. It was this that made him an effective speaker. Those who flocked to hear him knew that they were in the presence of a great *Karma Yogin*, one whose deeds were far more eloquent than the words of most orators. They knew that here was a man preaching straight from his heart. They respected him for his solid work and were convinced by his cool reasoning even against themselves.

He had to go out frequently and spend a larger

part of his time in travel or in the mofussil. He always insisted on attending to his own personal needs himself. Even when accompanied by younger workers he never took advantage of their solicitude about his welfare. It was an amusing sight sometimes to find him quietly sliding down from the train and making a dash for the water tap on the railway platform. Too late would a fellow traveller guess his intentions; and even then he would insist on fetching water himself. He would not give even the slightest hint about his likes and dislikes. He would partake of whatever was placed before him in common with others. All attempts at drawing him out in this connection invariably failed.

There were certain forms of inconvenience however, which he thought he should avoid, particularly if avoiding them involved his hosts in no inconvenience. One evening as he sat attending the anniversary of the Nakodar Arya Samaj he asked his old friend, the late Lala Shadi Ram, where he intended sleeping that night. The old man was rather upset and became a little suspicious. Smilingly Mahatma Hansraj added, "Shadi Ram, you were snoring all the night and kept me awake. Tell me in advance where you intend sleeping so that I may occupy another room!"

In the hands of someone else, the measures for relief which he so often organized in so many parts of the country might have been used for sectarian propaganda. He made it a point, however, always to instruct his workers never to take advantage of the distress of others, particularly when they had been sent to relieve distress. In Garhwal, Malabar, the Central Provinces and Bihar his workers always respected his wishes in the matter, with the result that they were very often spared the embarrassment which other workers sometimes experienced who lacked either the wisdom to practise such self-control, or the perception that there

are times when one should not appear too much of a zealot for one's religion. This self-denying ordinance always had its reward. Whereas another leader of the relief organization in Garhwal roused a storm of indignation by making disparaging remarks about the moral delinquencies of the people of Garhwal, Mahatma Hansraj was given a princely reception there when he visited it towards the end of the famine.

He was a prince of beggars. When once a cause appealed to him, he would leave no stone unturned to collect money enough to see it through. Whatever the cause, he never once had to complain about the lack of response to his appeals for donations.

Very often his would be one of the many appeals being simultaneously issued by a number of institutions and individuals for the same cause. Yet the response to his appeal was always far greater than that made to any other appeal. He once ascribed his success to popular sympathy with the causes he espoused. As he pointed out, the donations generally came, not from the Arya Samajists or the intelligentsia, but from businessmen, shopkeepers and the less educated members of the general public. This does not do full justice to the part his own personality played in the matter. The public was sure that no cause was likely to enlist his sympathies if it did not deserve support. They also knew that he would make one rupee go as far as two. Moreover at his call young men were apt to leave their studies, teachers to forget their lessons, doctors to leave their patients to others in order to go out as honorary workers wherever he thought it fit to send them. Undaunted they would face all dangers and surmount all obstacles in fulfilling the mission on which he had sent them. It was this that partly gave him his advantage over other organizations. If the amounts that he collected

for relief work in various places do not sound very impressive to-day, it has to be remembered that these proved more than enough for the needs he was trying to meet. The trust which he inspired and the hold that he had on the public were sometimes very touching. When issuing an appeal for funds to relieve the distress of the Hindus in Malabar, he sent one of his workers to Ferozepore with a letter to the president of the Arya Samaj asking him to start collections for the fund. The young man who carried the letter kept wondering all the time what sort of response this "begging letter" was likely to produce. He reached Ferozepore in the evening and unfolded his story. To his surprise he found an appreciative audience listening to him. The next morning a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Arya Samaj was held and Rs. 3,000 was collected on the spot from among those present.

It is true that the work in Malabar even though it had its critics appealed strongly to many. In far off Calcutta a young man hardly out of his teens sat unfolding to a hard-boiled businessman a vision for the reconstruction of the Hindu Society in Malabar which Mahatma Hansraj had then conceived. When the tale came to an end, with a shrug of his shoulders Seth Jugal Kishore Birla replied, "Well, put me down for Rs. 1,300 a month. You can have more if Mahatma Hansraj needs it."

Mahatma Hansraj's domestic life was very happy, though the death of his wife in 1914, and the imprisonment of his eldest son made it a little lonely. His love and regard for his elder brother and mother imparted to it even then a sweetness which it would have otherwise lacked. They were of course living apart. During the earlier years of his life his elder brother was very often away from Lahore and when he at last settled down at Lahore to the exciting life of a financier, Mahatma Hansraj had already made an indepen-

dent home for himself which he did not like to disturb. But even though they lived in separate homes, Mahatma Hansraj made it a part of his daily ritual to meet his mother and elder brother at least every evening if not in the mornings as well. This became such a regular part of his life, that many took advantage of it to waylay him while he was walking to his brother's house, in order to pour into his ears tales which they sometimes found it impossible to tell him in his busy hours.

He consulted his brother in all matters, public and private, making him his confidant to an extent which must have appeared to some of his juniors rather astonishing. He not only unfolded to him his own problems in the College or the Arya Samaj but would consult him in most matters concerning others as well. Though the one was following the rather prosaic pofession of a financier which is apt to turn a man into a money making machine, while the other was busy in humanitarian activities, there was so much common between the two that they felt identically on many matters. Indeed, as Lala Lajpat Rai bears witness in his *Autobiography*, there was a time when Lala Mulkraj wielded in the Punjab as much influence as, if not more than, the influence Lala Hansraj wielded when he was Principal of the Dayanand College. Lala Hansraj often sought his brother's help in untying difficult knots which his own work presented to him. They sometimes differed—and differed violently—in their views on public affairs; but both were content to leave each other alone in such matters. All through his life Mahatma Hansraj treated his elder brother with a regard and respect rarely met with in these days.

Towards his mother he showed, if possible, even deeper respect. He asked for her blessings in

most of his undertakings, and as his *Diary* proves this was no empty formality. Her death affected him as few other events ever did. He always regarded her as "a protecting arm keeping the family together and warding off evil."

He followed the fortunes of his sons and sons-in-law with a keenness which might have astonished them had they always known the deep interest he felt for them. He was not, however, by nature demonstrative and learnt to control his emotions so completely that very often even those dearest to him were unable to penetrate the mask which he seemed to bear as a public character. They usually learnt to look upon him as a great public figure long before they realized that they themselves had a warm place in his heart. This tendency was accentuated after the death of his wife in 1914.

Immersed all his life in busy activities, Mahatma Hansraj was yet a patient seeker after truth and spiritual experience. He began his day with one or two *bhajans* (religious songs). These were intended to put his mind in tune with the infinite. Two or three of these became his favourites through life-long familiarity. One of them so well illustrates his conception of Godhead as to bear reproduction here.

हे जगत् स्वामी प्रभु जी,
भेंट धरूँ क्या मैं तेरी ॥
माल नहीं मेरे सम्पद नाहीं,
जिस को कहूँ मैं मेरी ।
इस जग में हम ऐसे विचरें,
जोगी करे ज्यों फेरी ॥

धन जन यौवन अपने माने,
मूर्ख भूला भारी ।
तुझ बिन और सहाई न मेरा,
देख लिया मैं विचारी ॥
यह तन यह मन होए न अपना,
है सब माल तुम्हारा ।
जब चाहें तब ही तू लेवें,
नहीं कुछ जोर हमारा ॥
तुमरे दर का मैं कूकर स्वामी,
लाज तुझे है मेरी ।
चरण शरण निज अर्पण करके,
देओ भक्ति बिन देरी ॥

This hymn breathes a spirit of complete dedication and surrender to God's will. It was a daily reminder that whatever a man has is due to God's grace only. Nothing could have been more fitting to begin each day in the life of this great worker whose every action was a witness to the spirit of dedication which animated him.

This would be followed by what he used to call in his *Diary*, the *Jap*. He now recited certain Vedic prayers which were again very well chosen and illustrate the spirit of dedication in which he desired to spend his days.

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।

युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो
भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥
(यजु० ४०, १६।)

तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरम्,
तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम्।
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्तात्,
विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम्।
(श्वेता० ६, ७.)

Then would come the Vedic Prayer (the *Sandhaya*) recited silently in a thoughtful mood. Here too his attitude was one of complete self-identification with the words of the prayer. It was his constant endeavour to forget himself completely during the half hour and more which he thus spent. The Sanskrit text of the prayers would be always supplemented by *Prarthana*, (prayers) which to suit his changing circumstances, varied with his own mood.

This daily routine was never altered. He knew however, that the one thing necessary was this constant companionship with God, and that it was not of vital importance how and when he found the opportunity. Usually, of course his mornings and evenings would be dedicated to this task. But on board the ship when he found it difficult to make time for his evening prayers before dinner he used to say his evening prayers just before going to bed. Similarly he never indulged in exhibitionism by insisting that public business should be interrupted in order to give him time for his prayers in public.

While he was Principal of the College, and for many years afterwards, he followed up his prayers

by performing *Havan* every morning regularly. Again it was an act of personal devotion, never a mere ritual. In this daily *Yajna* (Sacrifice) he renewed his decision to make his own life an ever continuous sacrifice in the cause of his religion and country.

By thus renewing his faith in God by daily intimate communion, Mahatma Hansraj developed a deep and vital faith which enabled him to rise above his surroundings and bend them to his will. His *Diary* bears constant witness to this phase of his life. Early in 1923 politics seemed to be overshadowing everything else. The College and the Arya Samaj—and with them Mahatma Hansraj—were passing through what seemed to be a very critical phase in their history. We find him recording this superb "confession of faith" of a devout theist in his *Diary*.

"*March* 8, 1923. O Lord: You are my only protector. Protect me. You have seen me through every difficult turn in my life, sometimes in spite of myself. Help me out of my difficulties now as well. Give me strength so that my spirit may not fail me."

His limitless faith in Divine guidance made him firm in facing difficulties which would have daunted a lesser man.

But his innate humility saved him from that complete identification of all his actions with God's will and guidance which men with a strong faith in God are sometimes apt to develop. He hated *Gurudom* in all its forms; it gave him no pleasure to 'boss' other people. He always tried to keep himself in the background whenever he could. When friends and foes alike tried to identify him with the Dayanand College or the Arya Samaj his modest answer is found recorded in his *Diary*: "God is the protector and guide of the Arya Samaj and not I."

It was this same modesty which prevented

his gathering round him a circle of admiring followers always ready to say 'yes' to whatever he suggested. His lieutenants and juniors respected him and his wishes, but he always so trained them that not one of them was ready to sacrifice his own personal convictions simply to please him. As he records in his *Diary*, "*May* 24, 1920. My life is somewhat lonesome. I have no loving disciple, as Gokhale or Ranade had," or again, of one who was supposed to be very close to him; "His attitude towards me is not like mine towards Lala Sain Das. I used to go to Lala Sain Das's house every day, he never comes to mine unless I send for him."

January 12, 1922. "It is my fault that I have not produced staunch supporters. This is due to the fact that I have never tried to take advantage of the sentiments and the emotions of others."

He did not set undue value on conventionalities, religious or otherwise, if they caused inconvenience. In the city of Lahore carrying the dead body to the cremation ground from a long distance very often creates a difficult problem particularly when the dead bodies of infants have to be carried to the river. Thus when the young child of a friend died, we find him approving of its being carried to the riverside in a tonga.

He was one of the world's great workers. As he himself records in his *Diary* on 14th September, 1922, "I am a worker and shall die in harness."

In fact he had so much work to do that he felt its demands were too exacting. "29th *June*, 1922. The trouble is I get no time to think."

And again, "*November* 7, 1921; Can I not elevate my life ?......All my life is spent in routine. I get no time for deliberation."

November 9, 1921. "I do nothing to reform my way of life. All my time is spent in dealing with questions of detail."

Three years later he summed up the situation thus: "*September* 14, 1924; Though I spend a good deal of time working, my means are not sufficient."

Earlier he had recorded, "*January* 17, 1924. I do not know how I should organize my daily life. There is an immense amount of work to be done. Travelling has now become troublesome but it is difficult for me to avoid it as there are so few workers."

The remedy seems to have been suggested when he attended the Unity Conference at Delhi in September, 1924, for we find him recording in his *Diary*, "*October* 4, 1924; If I could have a staff, I could do a good deal of work from Lahore. I think something should be spent on reoraganizing the office of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha. A good deal of work can be done by correspondence."

Something was done in this direction when a salaried Assistant Secretary was appointed to do part of the routine work but this did not relieve Mahatma Hansraj of very much of his burden. He followed it up by making the Sabha agree to the election of two Honorary Joint Secretaries who were, under his directions, to do most of the routine work in which he had hitherto been immersed and which had made him record earlier in his *Diary* that the work that he did was that 'of a labourer rather than that of a leader'. He wanted to be free to devote himself to such problems as deserved his special attention. Just then the work in Malabar, Garhwal, and Bengal was expanding. He felt that if he was free from the cares of office, it might be possible for him to expand the Arya Samajic sphere of work in these and other directions. He looked round for a likely successor; but unfortunately Lala Devi Chand whom he tried to persuade was not willing enough to leave Hoshiar-

pur where the Dalit Uddhar Mandal was fast developing under his care. It was not till 1927 that he was able to persuade Lala Mehr Chand to become the President of the Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha and thus give him a welcome relief from the labours of office.

Identified as he was with the Dayanand College and the Arya Samaj all his life, he developed the habit of measuring everything by one rule, the interests of these two institutions. For example when he heard that one of his friends was thinking of entering the Legislative Council under the new regime, the first thought that came into this mind was how this would affect the interests of the College. As he records in his *Diary*.

" *May* 4, 1926. Everybody is now urging him to stand for election to the Punjab Legislative Council. He is forty-three now. Taking this into account as well as the longevity of life in India, I told him that he might do so. He is bound to take this step sooner or later. Let us see whether this does not result in his leaving the College. Well, God will protect the College."

A little later he records a conversation with his elder brother on the same topic.

" ......has consented to stand for the Legislative Council. I discussed the question with Bhai Sahib (his elder brother, Lala Mulkraj). We were wondering whether he would leave the College. Let us see what Fates have in store for the College."

This phase is illustrated by yet another entry in his *Diary*. He went to see an old colleague of his and there he met a great Sanskrit Scholar. The latter began to talk. The comment in the *Diary is* revealing :

" *January* 26, 1924. Swami...........was there. He began to talk.............. It is impossible to listen long to him and go on believing in all that

Swami Dayanand taught. His talk was enough to turn a man into a non-believer."

While the Non-co-operation Movement was at its height it seemed to some that the new forces let loose in the country would put an end to the Arya Samajic activities. But Mahatma Hansraj thought otherwise. The following record in the *Diary* is illuminating.

"*July* 6, 1921. We talked about the Arya Samaj and politics. I said that the Arya Samaj has its own field of activities. Even when we get *Swaraj* (Self-Government), the Arya Samaj would still be needed. He said Arya Samajic work had three aspects, social, religious and national. The Arya Samaj would of course continue to carry on its useful activities in social and religious spheres even then. But a part of the national work has now passed into the hands of the Indian National Congress. I explained to him that Hindu prestige demands that even this be done by the Arya Samaj. The means at the disposal of the Arya Samaj are weak. Sacrifice and hard work are diminishing. I added that we should not only display a spirit of sacrifice to a greater extent but also make it known as well."

This reveals another aspect of his character. All his life, he never sought a personal quarrel. If a quarrel was forced on him on account of some public action, he forgot it as soon as the occasion was over. If the necessity arose, he would forget all the hard things that might have been said about him and offer hearty co-operation. In September, 1924 we find him attending the Unity Conference at Delhi and there co-operating actively with some of the Hindu leaders who had been reviling him a little earlier. All that the *Diary* records, however, is the rather cryptic statement.

"*September* 20—30, 1924. On account of the Conference we are now nearer to each other. He

is very much inspired by Hindu sentiment and on that account a thousand times better than Nehru and others."

The result was that, putting aside all thoughts of personal prestige he was often able to play a very important part in consultations which obviously seemed to be essentially political and, therefore, outside his usual sphere of activities. That the Unity Conference at Delhi, (September, 1924) did not succeed in subordinating the interests of the Hindus to rather false notions of political exigencies was thus mainly due to him.

The same thing happened in December, 1924. The Hindu-Muslim relations in the Punjab had become strained on account of Sir Fazl-i-Husain's successful attempt to extend communal representation from the legislature to municipalities and public services. At first the Indian National Congress refused to take into account what it considered to be a small local squabble ; but eventually the political leaders awoke to the seriousness of the situation. After several other leaders had visited the Punjab in a vain effort to solve its problem, Mahatma Gandhi came to Lahore in the beginning of December, 1924. What happened is best told in the words of the *Diary.*

" *December* 6, 1924. I attended the Conference and listened to the demands of the Muslims. They wanted that Mahatma Gandhi should declare himself in their favour. They demanded that in the legislature, local bodies, and public services various communities should be represented in proportion to their population. Pundit Malaviya gave them a good reply. It was decided that the consultations should continue in the evening as well.................. Mahatma Gandhi suggested that some arbitrators should be appointed to go into the question and

decide it. The Muslims were not prepared to accept it.

"All of us came to Lala Lajpat Rai's house (where the consultations were being held). I was asked to be the spokesman of the Hindus present at the Conference. We unanimously declared that we could not accept the demands of the Muslims nor were we prepared to submit this question to arbitration."

He was a born fighter and sometimes seemed to thrive on opposition. Neither in the days of the split nor in the difficult period that the Arya Samaj had to pass through later, did he lose heart. But though an optimist his optimism was always born of realism. He never consoled himself by under-estimating the strength of his opponents. Towards the close of the year 1921 he wrote:—

"*December* 16, 1921. We are surrounded by hostile influences on all sides."

This was due to various factors which he had shrewdly indicated a few days earlier.

"*November* 10, 1921. The admission to the rank of Arya Samajic workers is at an end. Enthusiasm and sacrifices are now on the wane. The politically minded section wants to convert it into a sub-committee of the Indian National Congress."

Thus as we have already seen, when friends and foes alike seemed to be bent upon reviling him on account of his work in Malabar, he usually kept on his way unconcerned; though at one time he seemed to have got tired of it and declared :—

"*January* 1, 1923. I no longer feel like fighting. Of course if others (Arya Samajists) would take up the quarrel, I would certainly help them, otherwise I would remain silent."

This, however, seems to have been a passing phase. It was impossible to sit silent when the interests of his only love, the Dayanand College, were

at stake. Others might desert it, a few on account of illness, some on account of personal quarrels, still others on account of the lure of a wider field of publicity ; he was always there like an " ancient landmark."

But despite all that he was able to achieve, he had his moments of depression. On July 23, 1921, his *Diary* records

" The ship of the Arya Samaj is in a stormy sea."

This was probably because, as he had recorded a fortnight earlier, " The Arya Samaj which had so far been displaying a great spirit of self-sacrifice is no longer occupying the front rank." He was of course, referring to the tremendous amount of self-sacrifice—which some, no doubt, thought misdirected—that had been displayed of late in the political cause by the leaders as well as the rank and file of the Indian National Congress.

The same mood is again reflected in a later entry. " *November* 2, 1921. It struck me that we were doing nothing for the Arya Samaj."

On another occasion he wrote, " *April* 22, 1924. I am sixty today and beginning the sixty-first year of my life. Sometimes I get fed up. People will not work and yet go on finding fault with others. I do not know the art of publicity."

In spite of all his optimism the gathering weight of anxiety sometimes proved too much for him. On May 10, 1924, he wrote : " My heart became a prey to doubt. Will Swami Dayanand's mission come to an end ? Our Schools and Colleges have very few men who consider the Arya Samaj their only love. Have we not weakened our party ? Those we are trying to keep on our side do not care for us."

This was written at a moment when politics seemed to be swallowing everything else.

He always made it his special concern to take personal interest in the joys and sorrows of those with whom he came in contact. Members of the Arya Samaj, his colleagues in the College as well as the members of the Managing Committee, knew that whatever their station in life they could rely on him to come and cheer them up in their sorrows as soon as he learnt about them. As he entered the Arya Samaj Hall where the congregation gathered for the weekly meetings he always looked round to make sure whether any of those whom he was accustomed to see in their usual places were absent. If they were, he would try to find out what had kept them away. If the cause was illness or other trouble he would make time to call at the house of the member concerned and cheer him up in his illness or sorrow. Many a lingering patient looked forward keenly to his visits even though they might prove disturbing to him and his household. This solicitude was not reserved for those who occupied a high status in life. All were equally important to him, provided they were within the charmed circle of the Arya Samaj or the Dayanand College.

Sometimes this created an embarrassing situation or physical strain. On hearing the news of the death of the daughter-in-law of an old Arya Samajist, then living in retirement in Lahore, he went to visit him at his house on the Lawrence Road. There he discovered that he was one of the very few mourners present, with the result that he had to carry the bier on his own shoulders for a considerable distance. On another occasion he discovered that the relatives of an old man who died of plague had left him and that he had to arrange for the cremation himself. Young and old, rich and poor were equally subject of this solicitude if he learnt about their sorrows. Thus it was that he was able to keep in touch with various sections of the community and preserve its unity.

Those who were nearer to him on account of their work in the Arya Samaj always found in him more than the loving head of an affectionate family. When Lala Sain Das fell ill and it was suspected for some time that the temperature he was running might turn out to be the forerunner of tuberculosis, Mahatma Hansraj took him to Kashmir during the summer vacation. Similarly when Pundit Mehar Chand showed signs of heart disease, it was Mahatma Hansraj who had him brought up to Lahore, where all that the best medical advice could suggest was done. Similarly when another humbler worker, Lala Shadi Ram, developed typhoid at Hardwar, Mahatma Hansraj brought him back to Lahore and there nursed him in his own house.

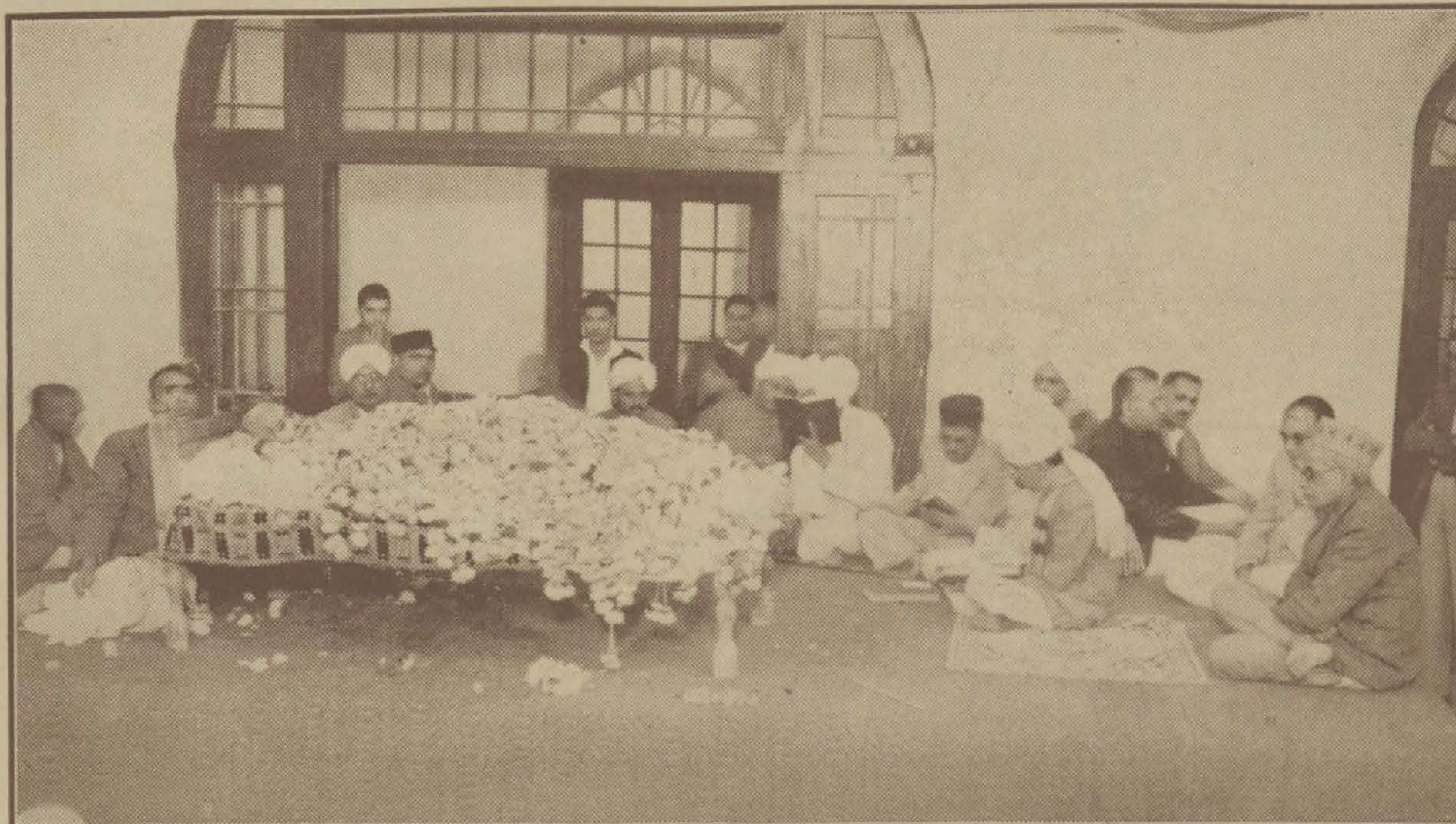
Thus in every act and every word he displayed the qualities of a great missionary. It was not what he said that mattered so much, it was what he did. One might fondly believe that one had got the better of him in an argument but it was of little avail. There was his life, verily that of a *Karma Yogin*, which had a message of its own and added a weight to his argument that no logic could upset.

CHAPTER XIX

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

Mahatma Hansraj had a frail physique but usually it seemed to be a good servant of his spirit. Except for his weak eyesight he had few serious ailments. But the physical strain to which he subjected his body sometimes told heavily on his health. At one time early in his career, he seemed to be developing signs of tuberculosis of the lungs but as said above Ayurvedic treatment soon rescued him from its clutches. In September, 1922, while at Dehra Dun for a short summer trip, he caught enteric fever. One evening his temperature shot up to 104°. Calmly and methodically he began to give instructions to his eldest son for the disposal of his property. He had so seldom been really ill that the least sign of serious illness disturbed him. In 1923 his work in the burning heat of June and July in the hot plains of the United Provinces resulted in his developing a carbuncle. He was rushed to Lahore from Agra where he was at once successfully operated upon. After a month of serious anxiety he was pronounced out of danger. A Sadhu whom he met casually in the course of a train journey suggested that he had diabetes. For a year he went on worrying about it and subjecting himself to various tests till he was finally assured that there was not the least possibility of his being diabetic. Meanwhile his eyesight began to grow weak. In 1933, he went to Vienna accompanied by his eldest son Lala Balraj and a famous Viennese surgeon performed an operation which restored his eyesight, but not sufficiently for him to read and write.

He went on with his work passing a busy life. Towards the middle of 1938 when he went to Hardwar for his usual spring retreat, his health was



Mahatma Hansraj Lying in State.

again somewhat upset. He complained of headache and sleeplessness. When he returned to Lahore he was examined by an eminent physician, who could detect no sign of any serious disturbance. He went to Solan for the summer where he recovered a little of his normal poise. But restlessness still persisted with occasional sleeplessness. In September he returned to Lahore.

Towards the middle of October he again developed symptoms of trouble, though not serious enough to cause anxiety. On October 25, he went for his usual morning walk and returned home at about 9 a.m. At about 11 a.m. he developed stomach ache and soon his temperature began to rise. By the evening his condition had grown worse. None of his sons or daughters was at that time at Lahore, but his eldest son, Lala Balraj, was summoned by telephone from Delhi. Meanwhile Dr. Vishwa Nath examined him and found his condition serious. In the evening the foremost physicians of Lahore held a consultation, they agreed that his condition was somewhat grave but were hopeful of his ultimate recovery.

Unfortunately, when he was well on his way to recovery other complications set in. At one time it was thought that he had developed pleurisy. All the resources of modern science were employed for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease but without effect. His pulse began to get erratic and he passed some blood on November 6. More consultations were held among the physicians and Colonel Harper Nelson was telegraphed for from Jammu; he was unfortunately not available. Everything that was humanly possible was done to fight the disease, but nothing gave him any relief, and at 11 p.m. on November 16, he passed away.

The next day the news of his death spread all over the town and the morning newspapers carried it to every corner of the land. At quarter to eight

in the morning his dead body was carried to the D. A.-V. College Hall to lie in state in order to enable thousands of his admirers from all parts of the country to pay their last respects. It was a fitting sequel to a life of constructive activity. There he lay on the platform which he had so often adorned in so many capacities. The spirits of the illustrious dead who had been his colleagues seemed to be looking upon him from their portraits in the college hall; Lala Lal Chand who had guided the D. A.-V. College movement from its infancy seemed now to be welcoming him smilingly as he joined the band. But Swami Dayanand Saraswati seemed to be in two minds as he watched this disciple of his joining the immortals through the gates from which there is no returning. That wistful look in his eyes seemed to express some anxiety on finding the place vacant which Mahatma Hansraj had so worthily filled, even as he welcomed this *Karm Yogin* back from the earth which he had tried to render a little more pleasant for others to live in.

Meanwhile the stream of his admirers marched past as he lay there in his last sleep. Rich and poor, literate and illiterate, co-religionists and those against whom he had fought so often, but never unfairly, citizens of Lahore and mofussilites, all marched past paying their last tribute. Train-loads arrived pouring out their tightly packed passengers all eager to have his last *darshan*. Motor buses brought other admirers from far and near. There he lay, surrounded by the Pundits chanting the *Ved Mantras*. The Deputy Commissioner representing the Governor laid his wreath at the foot of the bier. The Punjab Government was represented by its Finance Minister and the Minister for Education. The Speaker of the Assembly, himself a student of Mahatma Hansraj, hastened to pay his last homage to the creator of the modern Punjab. The Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab

University came to mourn his loss on behalf of the University which owed more to Mahatma Hansraj than to any other single individual. The staff and the students of the D. A.-V. College and its sister institutions marched past in silent homage. His colleagues of the D. A.-V. College Managing Committee and members of the Arya Samaj at Lahore and elsewhere whom he had so often led to victory, now filed past mourning the leader who would never again lead them.

At 12-20 p.m. the funeral procession started from the D. A.-V. College. All the educational institutions of Lahore had been closed as a mark of respect to one who had closely identified himself with the educational development of the country. Some of the Government offices were also closed and every public servant, who expressed a desire to attend the funeral, was allowed to do so. The Hindu shops in all parts of Lahore were closed, so were most of the Muslim shops in the streets through which the funeral procession passed. It was a sight the like of which Lahore had never seen during the last hundred years. Among the mourners there was no distinction of caste, creed or colour. The Arya Samajists mingled with the orthodox Sanatanist Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians. Judges of the High Court, Members of the Punjab Government and, the Leader of the Opposition marched shoulder to shoulder with the principal mourners, the Arya Samajists. The funeral procession was about a mile and a half long.

It was soon realized that it would be impossible to carry out the last rites within the four walls of the Hindu burning ground. The procession, therefore wended its way to the open spaces on the banks of the Ravi. It took the procession five hours to reach the *Ravi* where at 5-15 p.m. all that was left of the abode of his soul was entrusted to the flames to the tune of the *Vedic* prayers.

'Truly a *Mahatma*, a great soul, had at last found rest in the *Eternal.*

CHAPTER XX

MAKER OF THE MODERN PUNJAB

So lived and so died Mahatma Hansraj. We are living so close to him, that it is impossible for us to-day to measure fully the enormous influence that he exerted and the tremendous changes that his life and work produced in the country.

At the time of Mahatma Hansraj's birth in 1864, the Punjab was a backward province only recently conquered by the British. Bengal could then boast of a century of British influence ; several other parts of the country had been under the same spell for more than half a century. Modern reforming movements had already taken birth. In Bengal the Brahmo Samaj had been at work for some thirty years. Swami Dayanand Saraswati had started his crusade in 1863. The ambers of the Mutiny were slowly dying out soon to give birth to the Aligarh movement among the Muslims. By the time Mahatma Hansraj matriculated, the Arya Samaj had been established in 1875, originally at Bombay. At Lahore in 1877, Swami Dayanand revised the 'Principles of the Arya Samaj' as drafted at Bombay and founded the first Arya Samaj under the new dispensation. It was, however, one of the several reforming bodies in which the religious quest of the Punjabees found an expression. Swami Dayanand did not give much thought to the affairs of the half a dozen Arya Samajes established in the Punjab during his lifetime. When he made his will shortly before his death, he appointed Lala Mulraj one of the Vice-Presidents of the Paropkarni Sabha, but he was its only Punjabee member. There was nothing

in the 'logic of events' as they stood in 1883, when Mahatma Hansraj graduated, to suggest that the Punjab would one day take the foremost place in the Arya Samajic world.

On the educational side as well the Punjab did not enjoy an enviable position. Young Hansraj was one of the less than twenty graduates who took their Degrees in 1883 from the Punjab University, then barely a year old. Secondary education was then almost entirely in the hands of the state. In the newly formed Senate of the Punjab University, there was then not a single Arya Samajist. There was not the least indication of the Arya Samajists ever taking a prominent part in the educational development of the province.

When Swami Dayanand's death challenged the faith of the Arya Samajists, they succeeded in collecting Rs. 10,000 for a memorial which was estimated to cost at least one million. No one could have then dreamt that in place of the one memorial which the proposers were finding it difficult to raise, there would be scores of them.

But after half a century we find the picture completely altered. As was said at the time of the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the Dayanand College: "The tiny seedling planted in 1886 has now grown into a sturdy banyan tree giving shelter to some five thousand students at Lahore, and fifty thousand students outside, employing some three thousand teachers. The annual estimates of expenditure for the year 1936-37 for the D. A.-V. College, Lahore, and the associated institutions come up to more than Rs. 4,50,000. The schools, colleges and *Gurukulas* maintained elsewhere by the Arya Samaj are costing some Rs. 15,00,000 annually. The lands and buildings at Lahore alone have cost the Dayanand College Society about Rs. 12,00,000. The present value of the total property along with the funded capital of

the several educational institutions maintained by the Arya Samaj would come very close to rupees one crore.

"In return the Society can boast of a very proud record. The D.A.-V. College at Lahore alone has turned out 2589 graduates during the past forty years. The colleges at Jullundur and Cawnpore between them are responsible for another 1093 graduates. From the Dayanand High School, Lahore alone, 4809 students have matriculated during the last thirty years for which figures are available. Fifteen other High Schools have turned out another 6296 matriculates. It would be no exaggeration to put the total number of matriculates from the various Arya Samaj educational institutions—some forty of them—at 15000. Besides, 750 licentiates and graduates in the Ayurvedic system of medicine received their education in the Dayanand Ayurvedic College, Lahore, and are earning a decent living in various parts of the province and outside. The Dayanand Industrial School, Lahore, though the junior most member of the D. A.-V. fraternity, has already established a place for itself in the economy of the province and trained scores of Hindu young men in the arts and crafts of tailoring, book-binding, and carpentry. The Dayanand Brahma Mahavidyalaya (College of Divinity) again has proved its usefulness by giving adequate training to young men desiring to become teachers and preachers of religion.

"Impressive as these figures are, conclusive as their evidence is about the important position occupied by these institutions in the educational organization of the country, they do not tell the whole tale. 'By their fruits ye shall judge them,' and the D. A.-V. College can proudly stand this test. If its alumni include Judges of the High Courts, Ministers, Superintending Engineers, a Vice-Chancellor, a Post Master-General, and an Accountant-General on the official side, it is proud

to claim as its own eminent physicians, leading lawyers, famous journalists, great businessmen, well-known scholars, selfless patriots, sane reformers, pioneers of industry, and educationists of repute. In almost every walk of life and in almost every nook and corner of the province, and even outside the province, you are sure to meet D. A.-V.'s imbued with a spirit of sacrifice, service and self-reliance, the three beacon stars of the institution. They have made the Punjab what it is to-day. They have been waging a ceaseless war against ignorance, superstition, and poverty. Whenever and wherever there is some work to be done, the D. A.-V.'s have always been ready to put their hands to the plough. In distant Malabar, they not only heard the cries of the victims of the Moplah disturbances but also ran to their help. The famines in Orissa, the United Provinces, Garhwal, the Central Provinces and Rajputana, the floods in Bengal and Assam, the earthquakes in the Punjab, Bihar and Baluchistan, plague and other epidemics in the Punjab and Jammu, and incendiarism and worse in the North Western Frontier Province only tried their mettle and proved the heroic stuff of which they are made. They have braved dangers in the service of the country, religion and humanity, and set up a standard of sacrifice, public work, and honesty which others may well emulate.

"By reviving the Ayurvedic methods of treatment and making standard Ayurvedic medicines available at a reasonable cost they have helped in the alleviation of human distress. Theirs is the only educational institution, barring some of the Indian Universities, that has been carrying on research work of a very high order in the fields of Indian History, Sanskrit Literature, and Vedic Religion, and even some of the Universities in India may very well envy the output of the research work and the facilities for higher studies provided by the Dayanand College in these subjects.

"And at what a small cost has all this been achieved. All its office-bearers have been honorary workers, frequently spending money out of their own pockets in the discharge of their duties. Most of its buildings have been designed, planned, and supervised by eminent engineers and public workers for the love they bear to the institution.

"The spirit of dedication of its Life-Members and other workers in its cause, has enabled the college, in the words of Sir John Maynard, 'to make one rupee perform the work of two, nay more.' Thus with a funded capital of less than Rs. 700,000, the Society is running a First Grade Arts College, providing instruction up to the M.A. and M. Sc. standard, a Collegiate School which occupies the topmost position in the province, a School of Indian Medicine which is infusing life in the dry bones of the Ayurvedic system of medicine, a successful Industrial School, a School of Divinity and a Research and Publication Department."

But this work does not stand alone. Grand though it might look both in its design as well as in its execution, it becomes grander still when we take into consideration the influence which it has exerted on the entire educational organization of the province. The Punjab is not a very rich province, the provincial government is maintaining to-day only 83 High Schools and 19 Colleges of its own. The educational needs of the province, however, are being well served by a net work of 355 High Schools and 40 Colleges most of which have sprung into existence in the wake of the foundation of the Dayanand College in 1886. If the Punjab is able to take its rightful place in the educational life of the country to-day, the impulse that has made this possible came in 1886.

But the educational mission of the Arya Samaj has not been content with providing a lead to the other communities in the province. It has made

OM

Form No. 5

D. A.-V. COLLEGE.

MANAGING COMMITTEE OFFICE.

Lahore, 23 - 3 - 1917.

My dear L. Durga Dasji,

I know how keen an interest you take in my welfare. I am thankful to Dr. Hira Lalji also for his kind solicitude for my health. Though personally I do not go so far as to condemn my present residence, I think I must bow to the opinion of my medical advice. I will try to change my residence very soon.

I explained to Dr. Hira Lal the position taken by the

Committee from the beginning. The Com. is not at all to blame. I regretfully refused to lodge in the property of the Committee. I gave one or two of my reasons to Dr. [illegible] lately and he seemed to be satisfied. You know my reasons already.

Hoping you are all well.

Yours sincerely
[illegible]

it possible for the Punjab to take the foremost place in the Arya Samajic world to-day. The number of its Arya Samajes far exceeds that in any other province, just as the Arya Samajist population here is far in excess of that anywhere else. As we have already seen above, whenever, a challenge was thrown not only to the Arya Samaj but to the Hindu society generally, the Arya Samajists in the Punjab gladly accepted it. Not content with their work in their home province, they have treated the whole of India as their field of operations besides organizing foreign missions. Unmindful of the frowns of the British Government, Indian Princes, and political parties, they have gone on their path undaunted.

If any one man can be held responsible for this change it was Mahatma Hansraj. The Arya Samaj is a virile body to-day, but it is doubtful whether it could have been able to bend the contemporary circumstances to its will as successfully as it did without its so eminently successful educational mission. And it was Mahatma Hansraj who made it possible for the Arya Samaj to launch that great undertaking. Though the Arya Samajists needed one million, they had not succeeded in collecting more than Rs. 10,000 in the years immediately following Swami Dayanand's death. Enthusiasm, therefore, would have certainly waned if Mahatma Hansraj had not offered his honorary services in the cause of education. His offer made the institution not only a memorial to the services of Swami Dayanand but imparted increased enthusiasm to its cause by making it the embodiment of Hansraj's living martyrdom.

But even if it be granted that enough money could have been raised by the Arya Samajists for the College, it is improbable that it would have expanded into a great educational movement changing the face of the province without a Hansraj. He it was who made the dreams of Lal Chand and Sain Das come true. If Lala Lajpat Rai's oratory made

money flow into the coffers of the institution, it was because that oratory was backed so splendidly by Lala Hansraj. Whether the Arya Samaj needed social workers or foreign missionaries, the memory of the living martyrdom of Hansraj content with so little, cheerfully bearing every hardship, yet silently and unostentatiously achieving so much, added a weight to its appeals which always made them fruitful. The Arya Samaj was not yet itself an institution, much less had it created, maintained, and made fruitful so many institutions as its subsidiary bodies. Hansraj it was who gave shape to 'airy nothing'; he it was who blazed the trail. There are so many channels now through which the enthusiasm of young men can flow to bear fruit in social, political, or religious reform. Hansraj had to make his way everywhere. Having chosen his way, he kept on doggedly; neither the right nor the left tempted him. He put the stamp on thousands of young men; countless others learnt to follow him, however humbly, even without ever sitting at his feet. Neither a spiritual leader in its mere common sense, nor a political *Guru*, it was given to Hansraj alone to create a following, critical yet appreciative, tolerant yet observant. Founders of religious movements even might well envy him, for the great influence which he exerted on the public life of the country.

It is difficult for us in the Punjab to appreciate at its true worth either the stature of the *man* or the measure of his work. But it was not accident alone which made the Punjab the chief centre, the home province of the Arya Samaj founded in far off Bombay; it was not the impelling force of circumstances alone that made the Punjab respond to the call of the afflicted from all parts of the country. If the Arya Samaj fired the imagination of thousands of young men in the Punjab, it was mainly due to the example of the heroic self-sacrifice and dis-

interested services rendered by Mahatma Hansraj in his own quiet and unostentatious way.

But his influence was not confined to the Arya Smajist circles alone. Young m n belonging to all communities sat at his feet and imbibed the lessons which his life so well taught. Leaders of public opinion in other communities exhorted their followers by citing his example. The standard of self-sacrifice, devotion to duty, and selflessness set by him became the ideal which all public workers tried to keep before them even if they could not attain it.

Such men are the salt of the earth. They live and die so that after them others might live fuller and better lives than they would have been able to do otherwise. Out of the fullness of his heart, Mahatma Hansraj gave all that he possessed so that not only 'knowledge should grow from more to more' but 'more of reverence' should also dwell in us.

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